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ESSAY
ON
SEPARATION:
OR, A
VINDICATION
OF THE
Church of SCOTLAND.

IN WHICH

The chief THINGS in the *Testimonies* of these Reverend *Brethren* who lately made a *Secession* from her are considered, and shown to be no Ground of *Separation* or *Secession*.

Cor. i. 10. Now I beseech you, *Brethren*, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same Thing, and that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind and Judgment.

by JOHN CURRIE, A. M. Minister of the Gospel
at KINGGLASSIE.

EDINBURGH,

Printed by T. Lamisden and J. Robertson: And sold by G. Crawford in the Parliament-Closet, by Ja. Currie at his Shop in Scot's Closet; and by A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch at the Red Lion in Pater-noster Row, London, and others.

M. DCC. XXXVIII.

AN
ESSAY
ON
SEPARATION:
OR A
VINDICATION



Church of St. Andrew

IN WHICH

The chief Things in the Testimonies of
these Reverend Divines who lately made
a Separation from her are considered, and
shown to be no Ground of Separation
or Dissension.

By JOHN CURRIE, A.M. Minister of the Gospel
at KINGLEASIE.

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Printed by F. Leighton and J. Robertson: And sold by
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M DCC LXXXIII.

TO
The READER.

READER,

FOR any to write against *Separation*, when many among us seem so very fond of dividing from the Church of *Scotland*, 'tis to bring the *Odium* of not a few, and it may feared of some of the truly Serious, upon themselves; yet Separation from a true Church of *Christ*, as still the Church of *Scotland* is, 'tis so great a Sin, that I have thought it Duty to show the Evil thereof, be the Event what will. Tho' we should choose rather to have a *Milstone* hanged about our Necks, and be drowned therewith in the Depths of the Sea, than to give just Offence to any of *Christ's* little Ones; yet, if People take Offence for doing present Duty, we must not regard it. Hence the Apostle *Paul* withstood *Peter* to the Face, and other Jews no doubt who dissembled with him, condemning them for separating from the *Gentile* Converts, for fear of offending those of the *Circumcision* *. The Command of the great God is more to be regarded than the Favour of any Worm-Creature; and he hath said †, *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart: Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him*: And, among other Things, imported in the Apostle's Exhortation ‡, *To mark them that cause Divisions*; a showing the Evil thereof may be included. If any serious Person take Offence, I shall be sorry; for next to a Room in *Christ's* Heart, and being in Favour with him, a Room in the Heart and Esteem of his Members is to be prized: However their Favour must not

* Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. † Lev. xix. 17. ‡ Rom. xvi. 17.

The PREFACE

be bought at such a costly Rate, as to omit Duty, or commit the least Sin. If any suffer for declaring against sinful Separation, I humbly think he suffers for a good Cause, and may suffer with a good Conscience, as he suffers with good Company. That eminent Servant of Christ Mr. *Thomas Hog*, in the late Times of Persecution, for endeavouring to prevent Separation, and reclaim such as had separated; Mr. *James Hog*, in the *Life* of that excellent Person, says, "For this the Bulk of the separating People in these Times were filled with Indignation and the keenest Hatred against him, which they expressed by Names, and in Ways I love not to repeat." And it is to be regretted, sundry in our Day seem to be too much of a like Disposition. I am credibly informed, the last named Author, viz. the Reverend Mr. *James Hog* late Minister of the Gospel at *Carnock*, who sundry Times formerly had written against Separation, a little before his Death began again to write upon the Subject, testifying against Separation from this establish'd Church; and, had he lived to finish what he intended against what he calls *the dangerous Gangrene of schismatical Principles and Practices*, 'tis like the World had not been troubled with any Thing from me upon this Head.

Many think lightly of *Division* and *Separation*: But, as the judicious *Durham* says ||, "If People be not altogether stupid, they cannot but be convinced it is an Evil which hath many horrible Evils in it." I have often used the Word *Separatists*, not out of Contempt or Reproach, but as being shorter than to say *they who have separated, or who separate themselves*. If what I have written here may be blessed to convert any from the Error of their Way, or but to confirm others, preventing their Separation, I will not think my Travel lost.

Whereas it may be thought strange, I have given so many Instances of Faults, Failings or bad Acts of our Assemblies from 1638 to 1649 inclusive, which have been reckoned by some the purest Times of *Presbytery*; I own the Lord honoured his faithful Servants in that Period to do much for his Glory, for which I desire to give Praise; and my Witness is in Heaven, I have not mentioned any of those with a Desire or Design to blacken the Church of *Scotland*, or such worthy Ministers as lived in that Period, but for her Vindication at this Day, and to show, that, tho' the chief Ground urged by sundry for Separation in our Day, is our alledged dreadful, scandalous, unparalleled Apostasy from what

to the Reader.

what the Church of *Scotland* was in that Period, yet the Practice of Judicatories then is what can as little be justified in sundry Things, as the Practice of the Church of *Scotland* in our Times; which is evident from many Instances adduced in this *Essay*, as also from what *Rutherford* says in his *Dying Testimony*, cited afterwards P. 96. And, seeing such a great Man as he thought it Duty to give his Testimony against the Conduct of Church-judicatories in that Period, it may be some Apology for others, being compelled by such as magnify these Times, designedly to render the Church of *Scotland* odious at this Juncture; and, as he gives his Testimony against the Conduct of Church-judicatories in that reforming Period, so I cannot but think he and other worthy Servants of Christ at that Time, they argued, reasoned, voted and testified against most of these bad Acts which I have noticed, instead of looking on them as Precedents worthy of Imitation. 'Tis reckoned the prime Law to a Historian, *Ne quid falsi audeat dicere ne quid veri non audeat*, That he should dare, as to deliver any Falseness, so to conceal any Truth; and I can see no Reason, why the Faults of the Church of *Scotland* in that Period, viz. from 1638 to 1649 inclusive, should not be searched out, confessed, mourned over and testified against, as much as her Faults in 1650 or 1651 and other Times: Her Conduct in that Period is not to be our Rule, but as it agrees with the Divine Testimony. Tho' her Failings are not to be instanced as Precedents for Imitation, nor mentioned as the least Excuse for our Faults in later Times; yet, may they not be told, that we may confess, grieve for, and avoid them; and mentioned, to show, if such or such Things were not Ground of Separation or Secession then, they cannot be such now? If, as the Brethren affirm *, "Provocations both of an older and later Date are to be testified against, and if, as they add, this is necessary for the Conviction and Humiliation of all Ranks of Persons, necessary to maintain and preserve the Truths of God, and an useful Mean to transmit them to following Generations in their Purity;" Then, I hope, I shall be excused here. *Pythagoras* his Scholars were not to be justified in having such a Veneration for him as to lick up his Spittle, and as little are many of our Separatists, in that they look upon all the Acts of Assemblies in that Period to be faultless; which is the less to be admired, seeing we find the Reverend worthy Mr. *Renwick* and the Society-People, when declaring their Prin-

* Test. P. 14, 15, 16.

Principles in the *informatory Vindication* †, expressing themselves thus, "We sincerely, unanimously and constantly testify and declare our hearty Embracing of, and Adherence unto the written Word of God,——together with all the Acts and Proceedings of our General Assemblies, especially from 1638 to 1649 *inclusive*." And truly this also had some Weight with me to notice the Failings of the Church of *Scotland* in that Period, that sundry of our Separatists they look upon her Acts and Determinations at that Time as of little less Authority for a Rule than the Scripture, complaining, that since the Revolution she hath never revived and corroborated the Registers, Acts and Constitutions of those Assemblies: Affirming also, these ancient Acts of the Church of *Scotland* are a Part of the *Traditions which we have received*; and therefore People ought to withdraw from Ministers as guilty of scandalous Defections, while they remain so disorderly as not to observe them; according to the solemn Charge given by the Apostle, 2 *Thess.* iii. 6, 14 || But, if we be called to testify against the Sins of our Fathers from 1650, who can be displeased for going back in our Enquiry for the Space of twelve Years further? *Nehemiah* goes further back, Chap. ix.

To speak of the Faults of the Church in that Period, setting them in a true Light, tho' it may derogate something from her Honour at that Time, yet, if I mistake not, it cannot harm one Soul at this Day: Whereas the undue extolling of that Period, with a Design to depress the Church of *Scotland* from the happy Revolution, while all her Faults ever since are magnified, and she represented as an apostate whorish Church with which we ought not to keep Communion, is highly prejudicial to the Interest of Religion, to the Success of the glorious Gospel in the Hands of the Lord's Servants, and to the Good of immortal Souls, especially when there is such a Spirit of Division and Separation entered among People.

Whereas it may be thought, Men of different Principles will be ready to take Advantage from this to think or speak Evil of our Government. It would be considered, such Blamishes are not the Faults of the Constitution, but of the Men in whose Hand the Administration is: And as none can plead Blameless, so it would be easy to show many, and as great, yea far greater Faults in the Conduct of our Opposites, were we to search into them. Whatever the Heathen should think of the *Jewish* Religion, the Spirit of

God

God in Scripture hath recorded the Faults of his ancient People at large, for their Humiliation, and for a *Caveat* to After-generations, *Isa. xxx. 9, 10.* And I cannot think but the Edification of the Church of *Scotland* in our Day is to be preferred to her Honour and Reputation about an 100 Years ago. In the best Times of the Church, still 'tis told in Scripture, *The high Places were not taken away.* The Faults of the best, whether Kings, Priests or Prophets, are not covered: tho' *Moses* was an eminent Prophet of the Lord, tho' *Aaron* and *Eli* were eminent high Priests, and tho' *David*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* were eminent reforming Kings, tho' *Peter*, *James* and *John*, with the other Disciples, were the first Founders of the Christian Church, and eminent Reformers in the World; yet the Spirit of God hath recorded their Failings in the sacred Oracles.

As there have been vulgar Errors in Philosophy, Physick, Trade, and Things relating to the *State*; so also in Things relating to the *Church*: And if such as have made a Discovery of the former, have been esteemed the Friends of Mankind and human Society, I see not how such can be blamed as discover the last, especially at a Time when these Errors are cried up as Patterns worthy of Imitation. And if here I have not drawn strained Consequences, ripe up or discovered secret Faults to blacken her, nor told any Thing but Truth, I see not how any should complain; especially being compelled for the Vindication of our Mother-church from the Charge of *scandalous* and *unparalleled* *Apostasy* from what she was in that extolled Period between 1638 and 1649. And here I can say with *Neal*, when speaking of our *first Reformers* *, "I have taken the Liberty to point out their Mistakes as I pass along, but with no Design to blacken their Memory; for, with all their *Foibles*, they were glorious Instruments in the Hand of Providence to deliver this Nation from Antichristian Bondage." And as he says, *The Actions of our Predecessors are to be set in a fair Light, to be a Warning to Posterity.*

As what I have written is backed for the most Part with Authorities from the most learned, judicious, tender and zealous of our Divines in the Church of *Scotland*; so, which may be some Apology for the Length of this Essay, I have often given their Words at large, that so the Reader may judge for himself, and see he is not imposed upon, and that with Authority he may have the Reasons supporting their

Sentiments,

* Preface to *Neal's History of Puritans*, Vol. 3d, p. 10.

Sentiments, bare Authority being a weak Argument in itself. And whereas some may except against my Conduct in adding so many Authorities at large. But as I hope those Citations are pertinent, so my Apology is, That as in this Essay it was partly my Design to show how unlike the Sentiments of Separatists at this Day are to what hath been the Judgment of our Worthies formerly and of late, so I judge I could not do this so well as by giving their own Words. And had I not thought their Arguments against Separation would be of more Weight in their own Words with those I have to do, than the same Arguments as from me, without any great Difficulty I could make them my own, or put them in my own Words: But tho' probably this might been more for my Praise, yet perhaps it had not been so much for their Conviction. And tho' for the most Part I have confined myself to the Authorities of tender, zealous, learned Men in the Church of Scotland, this was not from Penury or Want of such in other Churches of Christ, far from it; but because I was perswaded their Names would be of greater Weight with many, yea, with the most of those who have separated from us.

Tho', by the Law of God and Man also, both Parties have a Right to be heard, yet the Generality of Men take far more Pleasure to hear Reproaches and Calumnies than to hear Men vindicate themselves or their Cause; and perhaps it was never more so than at this Day: Yet if it be Duty to vindicate our Neighbour's Character, albeit a declared Enemy, when charged falsely, then surely one may be excused for attempting to vindicate the Reputation of his Mother-church when loaded unjustly, or made blacker than she is, if he say nothing but Truth in her Defence. The Fire of Division being kindled in this Church, especially in the Corner of my Abode, where many do what in them is to blow the Coal, shall any be censured for bringing his Bucket to extinguish it?

In this Essay I have endeavoured to show, whatever Ground our *Brethren* had for Lamentation over sundry Things in our Case, yet they had nothing like sufficient Ground for a Secession or Separation. And what I have said against their Conduct, is not from the least Prejudice at any of their Persons: For, in Relation to them, here I join with *Rutherford*, when writing against the *Independents*, whom he terms *our Reverend and dear Brethren*, giving them also the *Epithets* of *Holy* and *Learned*, when he says *, "I

" hearily

"heartily desire not to appear an Adversary unto them."
 And as he adds, "There be wide Marches betwixt Striving
 and Disputing. *Why should we strive? for we are Brethren,*
the Sons of one Father, the born Citizens of one Mother
Jerusalem. To dispute is not to contend; we strive as
 we are carnal, we dispute as we are Men; we war from
 our Lusts, we dispute from Diversity of Star-light and
 Day-light; Weakness is not Wickedness."

I know it hath been noised abroad, I have not only
 preached much against Separation from the Church of *Scot-*
land, but also expressed myself with great Bitterness against
 those Brethren who have lately made a Secession from her.
 But I defy the World to instance any one bitter Expression
 or disrespectful Word I ever used in Preaching or private
 Converse against any of them: Far from it. Instead of
 that, in Converse I have sundry Times vindicated them
 from Things laid to their Charge. Nor did I ever preach
 against them, if it was not that as I have regretted their be-
 ing cast out, so I have said, in my humble Opinion, the
 Door is so opened that they lawfully might and ought to
 come in again, joining in Communion with their Mother-
 church. Nor have I ever used a bitter Expression against
 Separatists; tho' sometimes, when writing against the
 Author of *Plain Reasons*, it was not easy to restrain myself,
 considering the Barefacedness of some of his Slanders and
 Calumnies upon this National Church, and Tartness of his
 Expression; tho', when speaking against the Evil of Sepa-
 ration from a true Church of Christ, I have sometimes told
 how warmly Messieurs *Durham*, *M^r Ward*, *Shields* and others
 have expressed themselves against that Evil: For as I have
 been intimately acquainted with those Reverend Brethren,
 so I never saw that in their Deportment to make me doubt
 their being Men of real Religion; only their Principles and
 Practice concerning Separation are what I cannot approve,
 nor, in my humbly Opinion, can they be justified upon
 Presbyterian Principles and Scripture Grounds. And I
 hope they will not complain for writing, seeing in their
Testimony 'tis asserted *, "A Minister cannot be faithful
 to his Trust, if he can be a silent Spectator of the
 threatened Ruin of the Church of which he is a Member;
 for it is the Duty of every faithful Watchman to give
 Warning of approaching Hazard upon his Peril, *Ezek.*
 iii. 17, 18." And I sincerely declare I know not what
 can threaten the Ruin of a Church more than Separation.

b

In

* 1st Test. p. 83.

The PREFACE

In the Esteem of the Antients, this was *maximum malum*, the greatest Evil that could befall a Church. *Durham* affirms †, "There is no Evil that doth more inevitably overturn the Church than this." And says, "Tis as presently condemned in Scripture as corrupt Doctrine and Heresy."

Considering my former Intimacy with these Brethren, some say, I ought to been silent, whatever others might do. But however dear these Brethren have been, and still are to me, as worthy good Men; yet I hope none will deny our Mother-Church, *Christ's Spouse* in *Scotland*, may be, and ought to be as dear, yea dearer to us, *magis mihi amica veritas*. And, I doubt not, the Example of the Apostle *Paul*, in withstanding *Peter to the Face*, is recorded in Scripture for our Imitation, when he, with the Apostle *Barnabas*, and other *Jews*, walked not uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, in separating from the *Gentiles* in the Church of *Antioch*, for fear of suffering in their Reputation among the *Christian Jews*, *Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14*. Some Interpreters observe the Greek Word *ἀρτίστυν*, there rendered *Withstood*, is a military Word, a Word of Contending as it were Hand to Hand. *Paul* was zealous for his Lord and Master's Honour, tho' his own Esteem should sink, and the Life of his Reputation should go for it among such as had separated, and did set up for greater Strictness at that Time, which yet, I doubt not, was weighty to him. The Apostle might think he was not worthy of such a Master as *Christ* his Lord, who would not take a Blow for him, and encourage himself with the Thoughts of this, That if his adorable Master had Use for his Name and Reputation, he would certainly rub off the Dust which might be thrown upon it for doing his Duty. When I enter'd upon the Subject of Separation, I had not a Thought of mentioning our Brethren, as writing against their Conduct; but, upon second Thoughts, I judged it needful to consider their Testimony, which is so much admired, and taken for a Standard by Separatists at this Day; it being the Opinion of many, all that could be said against Separation would be of little Weight with them, if the principal Things in the Testimony were not considered. Our Sentiments of late have differed vastly, as to the Business of Separation; but, shall such as continue unchanged, desiring still to make the unchangeable Word of God their Rule, because they cannot change their Minds and Con-

sciences

† On *Scand.* Part 4. p. m. 261, 297.

sciences with the Times, be accounted unconstant or Changelings, when intirely of the same Sentiments as ever formerly? And it gave me the greatest Freedom in writing against Separation from the Church of Scotland in our Day, that I could neither see Scripture Precept, Promise nor Example, nor any approved Footsteps of the Flock to countenance it in any former Age, since Christ had a Church upon Earth.

Tho' here I can appeal to the *Searcher of Hearts*, I have said nothing with a Design to displease any, and said nothing but what I conceive to be Truth and Matter of Fact; yet, as I have not written with a Design to please any Party, so I lay my Account with Censure from Persons of very different Sentiments, some being displeased with one Thing, and some with another; yet, if any religious Person shall take Offence, it will be my Comfort that, as *Rutherford* says, "The Saints are not Christ, and there is no Misjudging in him." And tho' such as have separated should be displeased for writing against Separation and the Brethrens Conduct, yet all who remain in the Church of Scotland, countenancing their Ministry who abide in her Judicatories, they must either excuse writing against Separation, or give Sentence against themselves: For either those Brethren are to be condemned for keeping separate, and doing what they can to rent, ruine, and occasion Separation from her; or these are to be condemned, whether Ministers or People, who follow not their Example, making a cleanly Separation with them.

I once designed the Publication of this *Essay* before the last Assembly*; but considering the Temper of sundry that I doubt not are serious, who are so much under the Power of Prejudice, that they cannot endure to hear a Word against Division or Separation, I then delayed it; yet weighing what the Commission 1698 says in their *seasonable Admonition*, "We partake with another in his Sin, and indirectly consent unto it, if we neglect any Duty that lies upon us for the Cure thereof," I have now judged it present Duty to publish this *Essay*. And as the Assembly 1647 says, when speaking of their Endeavours to allay the unhappy Differences which were at that Time, "If any offend at discharging our Consciences, and doing our Duty, then we should rather choose to take our Hazard of that, than of displeasing God by Neglect of Duty." Little Matter tho' our Honour be laid in the Dust, if Christ's Name be renowned. And some being

* I own sundry Things are added since that Time.

as much disobliged already for not joining the Brethren, and declaring against Separation, and perhaps more than when upon reading, they may see there is a good deal more to be said in Vindication of the Church of *Scotland*, and against Separation from her, than they imagined. And, besides the first Four, considering the late Secession of other Brethren, with sundry of their Elders, and hearing of the formal Secession of People in sundry Congregations; considering also, that some in their Sermons, from Time to Time, are pressing People to separate from this Church and join their *Testimony*, while 'tis affirmed, As People would have Peace in a dying Hour, they must adhere to it: Many also having come to such Heights, as to make it a Term of Christian Communion. Being also credibly informed, this *Ad. Declaration and Testimony* is reprinted at *London*, and also at *Holland*, and, some say, translated in the *Dutch* Language, which cannot but much expose this Church to other Protestant Churches. Hearing also, some who have lately separated, and others who are upon the Rack, halting between two Opinions, being much importuned to separate, express their earnest Desire to hear what can be advanced against the Brethren, or others, for separating from this Church. Tho' some have told me, sundry will take Offence at publishing any Thing against Separation, or the Brethrens Conduct; yet, as I'm convinced no just Ground can be given there: so, from the former Considerations, hoping thro' the divine Blessing the Book may be of some Use, at least to confirm such, whether Ministers or People, as may be halting in this unsettled Day; being led in Providence to write my Thoughts upon this Subject, seeing I hear of none that are writing upon it, I thought it might be Sin to delay its Publication any longer, be displeased who will. And if any sustain the Apology, That it is Conscience with the Brethren to write and preach for Separation from this Church, I hope Charity will oblige them to think, others may be acted from the same Principle in writing and declaring against it. However, Events are to be left to him whose *Kingdom ruleth over all*.

Shall our *Brethren* be allowed again and again to publish all they can say to blacken the Church of *Scotland* and all her Pastors, frequently citing *Judges v. 23.* when preaching for Separation, which is enough to make some look on us all as a cursed Generation who come not out to join with them; and shall we not be allowed to speak a Word in our own Vindication? If Peoples Reputation, especially of

Gospel.

Gospel-Ministers, is to be dear to them as their very Life, it may be no less unreasonable to hinder them from making a just Defence for themselves, than for People to hold a Man's Hands when his Neighbour is knocking out his Brains. *Should not the Multitude of Words be answered *?* Surely no Man is to be condemned till he have License to answer for himself †, nor till he be fully heard ||: Hence, *Audi & alteram partem, Let the opposite Party be heard*, was an old Proverb among the Romans. Undoubtedly Self-defence is lawful and Duty, by the Law of God, of Nature and Nations; and not only Fools but wise Men are to be answered, if they speak amiss, lest they be too wise in their own Conceit, looking on what they have advanced to be unanswerable. *He that is first in his own Cause seemeth right*, but the Law of God allows his Neighbour to come and search him out ‡: And therefore People ought to have two Ears to hear both Parties before they pass Sentence. The Plaintiff having adduced his Evidences, all the World must own the Defendant ought to be heard and have the last Word before the giving of Judgment. Hath it not been said by sundry Separatists, That, if Separation from this established Church could justly be condemned, and could Plain Reasons with the Brethrens *Act* and *Testimony* be answered, it had undoubtedly been done by sundry Hands before this Time? And shall we see the Souls of our Flocks in Danger of being infected with that which is said to be the greatest of Plagues, viz. Division or Separation, and shall we be afraid to use Means to prevent it, or for curing it when entred? If the Reverend Messieurs *Rutherford, Hog, Webster* and others, thought it Duty to write against Separation in their Day, when the Number of Separatists was comparatively small; surely it may be much more a Duty at this Day, when so many are daily separating and making a formal Secession from this Church; and when some are become so unaccountably insolent, as to take himself by the Ear, and tell his Minister, He shall lose a Piece of it, if he make him not a thin Congregation, unless he separate from this established Church and join the Brethren, tho' that Minister hath always been esteemed one of the most tender in the Ministry. And the Lord's Command, to *prove all Things*, lays Obligation on us, to help our Neighbour in that necessary Work.

Some have said, 'Tis needless to write against Separatists; for

* *Job* xi. 12. † *Act* xxv. 10. || *John* vii. 51. ‡ *Prov.* viii. 17.

for 'tis impossible to convince them, tho' every Sentence written should be a Demonstration, if contrary to their Leaders, in regard they believe with implicate Faith, and credit, without Examination, all that's spoken by them. And it may be too true an Observation, *When People have drunk in separating Principles, tho' they have neither Scripture nor Reason for them, they are hardly recovered*; for, as Men Lusts are their Idols, so are their Errors: Hence *Augustine*, who wrote a Book of *Retractions*, acknowledged, That his Error was his God; *Error meus erat Deus meus*. It may also be too certain, that any Thing written under the Title of an Answer, tho' but Half a Sheet or but a few Notes in a Sermon, or but the Assertion of some private Christians, will be enough with many to make them believe all that's said in this *Essay* is either false or nothing to the Purpose, without ever looking into the Book themselves, never showing the least Regard to the Command of the great God, who enjoins us to *prove all Things*, and then to *hold fast that which is good*, 1 Thess. v. 21. Yet, I would fain hope, 'tis otherwise with many of them; and, *whether People will hear or forbear*, their Duty is to be told them: Who can but approve of the noble *Bereans*, who would not believe the Apostles themselves without searching the Scriptures, and trying if those Things which they affirmed were the Truth of God founded on his Word, or not *? 'Tis given as the Character of one that shall dwell with God upon his holy Hill, that he *taketh not up a Reproach against his Neighbour*; and as little will he take up or give Credit to it against his Mother, the Spouse of Christ, without the clearest Evidence and seeing with his own Eyes that there is just and sufficient Ground for the Charge; at least, without a narrow Trial, he will not receive the Testimony of her Opposites in Things which she refuseth.

Perhaps it will be said, in this *Essay* I have vindicated all the bad Things the Church of Scotland hath been guilty of at, or ever since the *Revolution*: But I absolutely refuse I have vindicated any one bad Thing she has been guilty of; for wherein she is to be blamed I have condemned or given Testimony against her. Only, whereas *Separatists* magnify all her Failings, I have endeavoured to set them in a just Light, showing what may be said in her Vindication against the Aspersions of such as magnify all her Faults, to make her odious, and occasion Separation from her.

As for that Book, intituled, *Plain Reasons for Presbyterian dissenting*

dissenting from the *Revolution-Church* in Scotland, which is often cited in this *Essay*; As most of the Things complained of in the *Brethrens Testimony* are insisted upon in that Performance, and urged as plain Grounds for Separation or dissenting from this Church, so it hath been look'd upon as a Standard by many of our Separatists. The plain Scope of it from first to last is to alienate the Affections of all from the Church of Scotland, to tear the Commission of all her Ministers, and to occasion a full Separation from her. It was published in 1731, a thousand Copies of which were cast off, and have been dispersed at home and abroad. I have heard there was a Meeting of the principal Persons among the Dissenters, I mean the Followers of Mr. *M. Mil-lan*, at *Edinburgh* before it was written, where each gave in what he judged culpable in the Church of Scotland at or since the *Revolution*; and, after drawn up, it was read over at some other Meeting: So, if my Information be right, the Book may be look'd upon as the Deed of the whole Party, tho' one or some few Persons might have the principal Hand in framing thereof. That which occasioned my looking more narrowly into that Book, was my being informed it was in the Hands of sundry of my Hearers, and highly prized by them. And as the General Assembly 1637 requires all Ministers to warn their Flocks against Books which maintain Separation; so I thought it Duty to give a Caution against it as a Book of that Nature, being stuffed with Slanders and Falshoods, upon which many took Offence; and for this some who were my Hearers at that Time said, they should never hear me more if they could have another Minister to hear: Yet my Sentiments of this Book were far from being singular; for I'm credibly informed, the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Boston*, a little before his Death, when speaking of it, said, "It was a Book of which he would not been the Author for the whole World, being stuffed with Falshoods and Calumnies, &c."

The Book hath carried sundry serious People off their Feet; and 'tis to be lamented, some born, and I doubt not born again in the Church of Scotland, have of late concerned themselves in spreading and recommending it; others are blessing the Lord ever they saw it; while some, who wanted not Opportunity to know the History of the Church of Scotland in former and later Times, have affirmed there are no Falshoods therein; and others assert we may as well deny the Bible as the Matters of Fact related in that Book.

I knew nothing of the Author when I wrote this *Essay*, tho' now I'm credibly informed, he who was undoubtedly the Publisher, and who 'tis commonly reported was the principal Author thereof, is upon Trials for the Ministry; but 'tis much to be questioned, whether such as are about to license him have not been inconsiderate, considering his Conduct and declared Principles (in *Plain Reasons*) however fit he may be by bold and groundless Assertions for carrying on of Schism or Separation, to the further Renting of this divided Church. And it may be thought strange he has Freedom to pass Trials in order to be licensed and ordained by any Ministers who have no other Authority to license and ordain but what they have received from such Ministers as were licensed and ordained by this Revolution-Church, considering what he says, p. 170. when endeavouring to show that Communion is not to be kept with any of her Ministers; for he knows not but those that are to license him are such as were licensed and ordained by some that *never had a Commission from Christ*, but *assumed it*, or got their Commission from those that *had none themselves to give*, or such as *had wholly subjected their Commission to strange Lords*, or were such as *had changed the Holding of their Commission, by taking a new Grant from the Usurper of Christ's Prerogative*: For, according to him, at the Revolution this Church received many such into Ministerial Communion with her. Yea, he knows not but some of themselves that are to license him, and many in the Church of Scotland at this Day, may be little better than unbaptized Pagans, being baptized by Ministers who got their Commission from such as *had none themselves to give*.

I request the Reader may forbear to censure before Reading, and that he believe not with implicate Faith, crediting the Testimony of such as may condemn what here I have advanced, without looking into the Book himself. We are to call none Master or Father but Christ; *Furor in verba Magistri*, or to pin our Faith to any Man's Sleeve, is irrational: Christ the Amen, faithful and true Witness, his *avros non*, or bare Affirmation, is only to be credited. Surely no Man's Name ought to bear such Sway with us as to make us digest any Thing without Trial because it cometh from him. Praying, as the Lord is one, so his Name may be one in the Church of Scotland; and that this Performance, however weakly handled, may be blessed as a Mean to cement his People and heal Breaches; I am,

Respectfully,
Your, &c.

I am,

J. C.
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ESSAY on Separation.



SEPARATION from a true Church, being not only a great Misery, but a grand Sin, surely, as Mr. *Shields* says, *It is Ministers Duty to show People how great a Sin Schism is* *: Therefore, hearing of none engaged in this necessary Work, I thought it Duty to attempt a Discovery of the Evil thereof, tho' sensible of my great Unfitness for handling such a Subject, in which I have engaged, out of Love to such as have lived in a separate State from the Church of *Scotland* since the happy *Revolution*, out of Regard to some who have lately separated, as also from a Concern for others that seem to be on the Wing for Separation; and to show, that such Pastors or People as adhere to the Church of *Scotland*, have Abundance to say for their Vindication in cleaving to her: While such evidence the greatest Uncharitableness, who say of any Ministers, " 'Tis more out of Wilfulness or Regard to their Stipends, than Want of Light, they have not joined in the late Secession."

C H A P. I.

In which 'tis shown the Church of Scotland is a true Church of Christ, from which we ought not to separate.

AS Separation from a Church of Christ, requiring no sinful Terms of Communion, hath still been reckoned

* *Renwick's Life*, P. 107.

koned a hainous Sin; so, I humbly think, it cannot be denied the Church of *Scotland* is yet a true Church of *Christ*, for all the *Marks* of a true Church are still to be found in her. Some who write upon that Subject make such *Marks* mo, and some make them fewer: But, not to trouble you with these, I think, to all who own the Obligation of our *National Covenant*, in which we are sworn to our *old Confession of Faith*, they must own she is yet a true Church of *Christ*; for, in the 18th Article of that Confession, which treats of the *Notes* or *Marks* whereby the true Kirk of *Christ* is discerned from the false, 'tis said, "It is
 " one Thing most requisite, that the true Kirk is discerned
 " from the filthy Synagogues by clear and perfect Notes,
 " lest we, being deceived, receive and embrace to our Con-
 " demnation the one for the other. — The Notes there-
 " fore of the true Church of God, we believe, confess
 " and avow to be, *First*, The true Preaching of the Word
 " of God, wherein God hath revealed himself to us, as
 " the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles do declare.
 " *Secondly*, The right Administration of the Sacraments of
 " *Jesus Christ*, which must be annexed unto the Word
 " and Promise of God, to seal and confirm the same in our
 " Hearts. *Lastly*, Ecclesiastical Discipline uprightly admi-
 " nistred as God's Word prescribeth, whereby Vice is re-
 " pressed and Virtue nourished. Wheresoever then these
 " former Notes are seen, and of any Time continue (be
 " the Number never so few, about Two or Three) there,
 " without all Doubt, is the true Church of *Christ*, who,
 " according to his Promise, is in the Midst of them."

Now, as to the first of these *Marks*, to wit, *The true Preaching of the Word*. It cannot be denied, but the Gospel of *Christ* is purely preached in the Church of *Scotland*; or, if it be not by some, 'tis not her Fault; for, as her Standards for Doctrine are pure, so she allows of no Errors in Doctrine: And, if some be erroneous, that's what hath been in the purest Churches of *Christ* upon Earth; there were some in the Church of *Corinth* who denied the Resurrection *; and *Rutherford* says †, "There was in
 " that Church a denying of a fundamental Point of Faith,
 " the Resurrection of the Dead:" And yet he asserts she was still a true Church, which was not to be separated from. The Church of *Pergamos* was a true Church of *Christ*, tho' she had some of them who held the Doctrine of *Balaam*, and also some who held the abominable Doctrine of the N-

* 1 Cor. xv. 13.

† *Peace, Plea*, P. 141.

Nicolaitans. Mr. Gillespie says ||, "To maintain and profess the true Doctrine and the true Faith, is by all Protestant orthodox Writers made one (yea, the principal) Mark of a true visible Church." And, as the Assembly 1735 transmitted to all Presbyteries an excellent Overture anent Preaching the glorious Gospel of Christ, so the Assembly 1736 unanimously turned it to an Act; which is a further standing Testimony of the Orthodoxy of this Church, and of her Concern to have sound Doctrine taught and preached by all her Ministers and Preachers.

But then, as to the second Note of a true Church, to wit, *The right Administration of Sacraments.* I think none can object against this, that the Seals of God's Covenant are as purely administered in this Church as ever they were in any. And the judicious Calvin affirms, "That, wherever there is the pure Preaching of the Word, and the pure Administration of the Sacraments, we may safely embrace that for a true Church. And, says he, We are never to reject the Society thereof as long as these remain, albeit otherwise it abound with many Corruptions: Yea, and adds he, Some Corruptions in the Administration of Doctrine or Sacraments may creep in, which ought not to alienate us from her Communion *." *Rutherford* says, "Separation from a true Church, where the Word of God orthodox is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered, we think unlawful †."

As to the third Note or Mark of a true Church, to wit, *The upright Administration or Exercise of Church-discipline.* I believe there is no Church that hath a more exact Form of Process for Discipline, than now the Church of Scotland hath. "In which, says Mr. Hog, the Substance of Presbyterian Government is ecclesiastically ratified, which, in my Judgment, adds he, hath carried us a Step further that Way, than was attained in former and better Times." And, if sometimes Discipline should not be exercised as it ought, that's not defended by the Church, and the coming short sometimes in this will not make her a false Church. See what Neglect of Discipline was in the Church of *Corinth*, when the incestuous Person, who justly deserved to have been excommunicated, was not censured according to his Crime, nor with any Censure at all ||;

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and,

|| *Miscel. Quest.* P. 136. * *Instit.* Lib. 4. Cap. 1. Sect. 12. † *Due Right of Pres.* P. 232. || 1 Cor. V. 1, 2.

and when such as denied the Resurrection were not cast out, as they deserved. See what Omissions were in the once famous *Asian Churches*, Rev. ii. and iii. Chapters, and yet were true Churches of Christ. As *Durham*, commenting on the Epistle to *Thyatira*, says, "Christ doth not rigidly cast off Churches for Defects in Discipline, and "Grossness of particular Members, when in the main the "Foundation is kept." Nor doth he allow of Separation from a Church because of this.

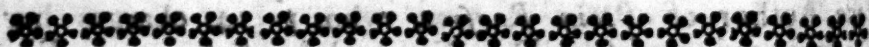
Again, upon the Epistle to *Pergamos*, he says, "Men "may be very straight and tender in the Work of God, "and bold in Reference to Suffering, and yet fail and be "very defective in the Prosecution of Church-censure "against erroneous Men." The late Reverend Mr. *James Hog* Minister of the Gospel at *Carnock*, in a Letter to a Friend, containing some Notes of a Sermon he preached November 12th 1733, which was a little before his Death, affirms, "That, while a Church is not off from the Foundation, but as to the main resteth upon it, it must be reputed a true Church, *Mat. xvi. 18. 1 Cor. iii. 11.* A "Church is to be accounted a true Church, and not off "from the only Foundation, while her Standards are pure, "and particularly when an Adherence to these Standards "is generally professed." And it cannot be refused this is yet the Case with us in the Church of *Scotland*. *Turretine*, having mentioned the above Marks of a true Church, speaks to the same Purpose *. And tho' some among us should be leavened with unsound Doctrine, and should vent it in their Sermons; and albeit there should be Faults both as to the Administration of Sacraments and Exercise of Discipline; 'tis far from being enough to unchurch, or occasion Separation from her, seeing she doth not own nor approve of these. And, if a true Church of Christ requires no sinful Term of Communion, then there can be no Separation from her without the hainous Sin of Schism: And so much *Durham* asserts near the Close of his first Lecture upon *Revelation*, Chap. xviii. And, I humbly think, none who knows what orthodox Divines reckon essential to the Being of a true Church of Christ, but will readily own all that, and much more, is to be found in the Church of *Scotland*. Hence, the Reverend and worthy Mr. *James Webster*, in his printed Letter to Mr. *M^r Millan*, says, "Sir, I must tell you in plain Terms, you decline the

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“ Authority of the purest and best constitute Church in the World ; and so consequently you must be of Opinion, that no Church in the World hath Authority, and that all the Ministers of the Gospel throughout the World are unfaithful, or be pleased to tell where a better constitute Church is.”

I frankly own there are many Things among us calling for Reformation, and should be testified against : Yet, notwithstanding of these, she is still a true Church ; yea, one of the purest Churches. And when I affirm this, 'tis not altering my Sentiments from any Thing I ever wrote ; for formerly, *Jus. Pop. Vind.* p. 65. I asserted, “ The Church of Scotland hath been, and is one of the purest Churches upon Earth for Doctrine, Discipline, Worship and Government.” And I never heard of any professed Presbyterian that had the Confidence to deny this, if it be not the Author of *Plain Reasons*, who, p. 14. charges her as being guilty of such Defection and Apostasy at the Revolution, as seems without a Parallel either in sacred or profane History. But I think these Reverend Brethren, who being ejected of late have made a *Secession* from her, are, or at least were, of far different Sentiments from this Author : For the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, in the Beginning of his Answers to the *Remarks* of the Synod of *Perth and Stirling*, of Date *October 12th 1733*, says, “ I know there is a great Body of faithful Ministers in the Church of Scotland, with whom I do not reckon myself worthy to be compared.” And downward, in these *Answers*, when speaking of the Ministers of this Church, says, “ I know that a vast many of them have God's Call and the Church's Call.” Now, if there be a *Body*, and a *great Body*, many and a *vast many*, in the Church of Scotland of faithful Ministers, having God's Call to the Work of the Gospel, I think she is a true Church of Christ ; and who can but own her for such ? And in his *Protestation* against the Sentence of the Assembly, in his Case *May 1733*, to which the Reverend Messieurs *Wilson* and *Moncrieff* adhered, declares, he had a *very great and dutiful Regard to the Judicatories of this Church, to whom, says he, I owe my Subjection to the Lord.* And in the Brethrens *Representation* to the Commission of Assembly 1733, when speaking of their Protest taken against the Commission that Year, they say, Our Protestation is so far from impugning the just Power and Authority of the supreme Judicatories of this Church, that it plainly acknowledges the same.” And
“ again,

again, *January 8th 1735*, Mr. *Erskine*, in his Letter to the Presbytery of *Stirling*, declares, *He had all imaginable Freedom to join in Communion with a good many of the Reverend and worthy Ministers, who are in Communion with this established Church.* Now, if a true Church, whose Authority in her supreme Judicatories in 1733 was to be acknowledged and regarded with a very great Regard as just, I hope she is not vastly worse since that Time; for some Stop hath been put to what was then the chief Ground of Complaint, viz. Violent Intrusions. I conclude this Head with the Words of *Durham* on the *Revelation*, p. 680. where he says, "There is a *Schisma*, that is, a separating from the Unity, and from the Communion of a true Church, whether more or less pure, if a true Church, this is simply and always sinful."



C H A P. II.

In which sundry Propositions anent Separation are laid down.

1st Proposition. *Difference of Sentiments and Division, tho' sadly to be lamented, are yet incident to the best of Men upon Earth.* Aaron and Miriam, the Saints of God, differed from Moses, and spake against the Servant of the Lord *. There were long and hot Disputes between Job and his three Friends, tho' also eminent Saints. Paul and Barnabas, may fall at Variance, and have sharp Contention †, so as to separate and part asunder; and we never hear of their meeting again, tho' for a long Time they had entertained most intimate Friendship and Familiarity. So in the Case of Chrysostom of Constantinople and Epiphanius of Cyprus, of Calvin and Luther, Zuinglius and Melancthon. Some are equally cruel with the Giant or Robber Procrustes, who would have all Men exactly of the Length of his Bed, chopping them of by the Feet if longer, and drawing them out by Force if shorter. Some would, and do, excommunicate all that are not exactly of their Mind.

2^d Proposition. *There may be different Sentiments with-*

* Numb. xii. † Acts xv. 39.

ent Separation. And hence the Apostle exhorts all to *for-*
bear one another in Love †, and to *walk by the same Rule*
whereunto we have already attained. If the Sentiments of
 all were the same, there had not been Need for any such
 Exhortation. As long as we see but in part, as we think
 others should allow us to differ from them, we ought to for-
 bear such as differ from us, I mean in Things not funda-
 mental: As the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* says †, "It
 is the Apostolical Direction, *Rom. xiv.* That we should
 not condemn others that have not Freedom to come up
 to our Length." And Mr. *Moncrieff* of *Golfargie*, who in
 1716 was Author of that Pamphlet, intituled, *The Church*
of Scotland's Grievances considered, speaks excellently to this
 Purpose, p. 2. where he says, "It is no new Thing to see
 Men (happy in the greatest Attainments of human
 Learning, and blessed with the Influences and Graces of
 the Spirit of God while in this militant State, where
 great Fogs of Ignorance cloud the Understandings of
 the best) differ in their Judgments about Sin and Duty;
 since one Way of thinking, and an entire Harmony of
 Judgments, is reserved as a valuable Jewel of that Crown
 of Glory which shall encircle the happy Heads of the
 Church triumphant." I have somewhere read of it as
 the *Motto* *Jeremiah Burroughs* wrote upon his Study-Door,
Opinionum varietas & opinantium unitas non sunt adversa-
ta; Different Sentiments and cordial Agreement are not
 inconsistent.

3d Proposition. *Tho' Separation from a true Church be a*
great Sin, yet here good Men have sometimes been guilty *.
 Because such or such Persons may be good, and eminently
 good, that's no Argument to prove them in the right in Se-
 paration from a Church. *Peter* and *Barnabas*, tho' emi-
 nent Saints, thro' the Violence of Temptation they sepa-
 rated for some Time from the *Gentile Converts* in the
 Church of *Antioch*, *Gal. ii. 12, 13.* for which *Paul* withstood
Peter to the Face. In the late Times Differences came to
 that Height among honest suffering People, that some of
 them would not join together in Family-worship; As when
 about Eighty of them were imprisoned in the *Canongate Tol-*
booth, because some of them had heard the Indulged. I had
 this from one of them, who told me he wrote from Prison
 to Mr. *Renwick* for Advice, who in Answer condemned
 them that would not join with others, seeing they were all
 suffe-

‡ *Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* † *Pref. to God's little Remn.*
 p. 26. * *Acts xi. 24.*

suffering for the same Cause; and unto such a Height some seem to be going at this Day. The best of Men are not infallible; and we must follow no Man further than he follows Christ. Few, if any, doubted of the Reverend Mr. *Hepburn's* being a singularly good Man; And I heard one who was intimately acquainted with him affirm, Had he not met with Disobligations from some in his Presbytery, he had never gone the Length he did in Separation: And that Person declared he heard him say, Had his Lot been cast in some other Presbytery in Scotland, he had never offered to separate from this Church.

4th Proposition. *Communion may be kept with a Church, tho' her Faults and Corruptions be many:* For we are not to expect a perfect or faultless Church here upon Earth. As the Members of the Body of Christ are not perfect in this Life, so neither is the Church herself, which is his Body: Nor is this to be expected till we come in the Unity of the Faith to a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*. *Augustine* called it "The Perfection of Christians, that they acknowledge themselves never to be perfect in this Life." And *Mather*, somewhere in his History of New-England, says, *This may be called the Perfection of Churches.* Mr. *Shields* affirms, in his *Hind let loose*, p. 226. "Tho' there be many Things in a Church to brangle and lessen the Comfort of our Communion with it, and the Ministry thereof; yet we may keep Fellowship with a true Church, tho' in many Things faulty and corrupt, as all Churches are in some Measure in this militant State. As the Church of Corinth had many Corruptions in her Practice, yet no Separation is enjoined from it: And the Lord did not require Separation from the Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, tho' they had many Corruptions and Deficiencies in Discipline, in a Toleration of Hereticks; and would lay no other Burden upon them, but to hold fast what they had: As Mr. *Durham* shews on the Revelation, Chap. ii. Lect. 6. as also, Chap. xviii. Lect. 1." And our Westminster Confession says †, *The purest Churches under Heaven, are subject both to Mixture and Error.*

5th Proposition. *Tho' we are not to separate from a true Church of Christ albeit her Faults or Corruptions be many, yet we are obliged to separate from all the Corruptions which may be in a Church.* To separate from Corruptions is one Thing, and to separate from the Corrupted is another Thing:

* Eph. iv. 13. † Chap. xxv. Sect. 5.

Thing : One may be a Member of that Church in which there are many Corruptions, and yet remain uncorrupt, and keep himself pure. We are neither to touch, taste nor handle any Thing that's sinful. Tho' the Peace of *Jerusalem* is to be preferred to the Head of all our Joy, we must never say A Confederacy with any that say A Confederacy : And we must be Men of Strife and Contention to the whole Earth, rather than be guilty of the least sinful Compliance. Sin is always bad Cement for them who are God's Building : We are never to *give Place* to any, nay, not for an Hour ; nor to unite so much as for a Moment in any Corruption. Such as are the Temple of God are never to have Agreement with Idols, but ought to come out from among them, and be separate ; as the Apostle exhorts, 2 Cor. vi. 17. where he is speaking of having Fellowship with Men in their evil Works and Corruptions, but not of Separation from the Church of *Corinth*, as may be shown afterwards.

6th Proposition. *While we can maintain Communion with a Church without Sin, and while sinful Terms of Communion are not required of us, we are never to separate.* Yea, *Rutherford*, speaking of the Popish Ceremonies of the Church of *Old-England*, says *, *We teach Separation from these Ceremonies to be lawful, but not from the Churches.* So *Durham* says †, “ When Men may unite without personal Guilt or Accession to the Defects or Guilt of others, there may and ought to be Union, even tho' there be Failings and Defects of several kinds in a Church ; — because Men are to reckon not for other Mens Carriages, but their own : And no such Church-state is to be expected as is free of Defects. Beside, can it warrand a Man to abstain from his Duty because others do not theirs, whileas there is no sinful Impediment lying in the Way of his Access thereto ? ”

7th Proposition. *There is a Separation which is called Separation negative, or a Non-union, and a Separation positive.* Negative Separation is, when the Person or Persons separating only makes a Secession from a Church by withdrawing from Communion therewith, without making any Head against that Church from which they depart or make a Secession. Separation positive is, when these who withdraw do not only make a Secession, but also associate themselves into a distinct opposite Body to that Church from which they have made

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* *Due Right*, p. 73. † *On Scandal*, Part 4, Chap. vii, p. m. 307.

made a Seceſſion, ſetting up a Church againſt a Church, or *Altar* againſt *Altar*. And this, ſays *Jenkin* on *Jude* 19. "is that which in a peculiar Manner, and by way of Emi-
" nency, is called Schiſm." *Rutherford*, having laid down this Diſtinction, ſays ‡, "Tho' a Church of Schiſma-
" ticks retaining the ſound Faith, yet ſeparating from o-
" thers, be deſerted by any, it is a negative Separation from
" a true Church, and laudable. As the Faithful in *Augu-*
" *ſtine's* Time did well in ſeparating from the *Donatiſts*;
" for with them they were never one in that Faction, tho'
" they ſeparated not from the true Faith holden by *Do-*
" *națiſts*, but kept a poſitive Union with them: So do all
" the Faithful well to ſeparate from the Churches of the
" *Separatiſts*."

8th Proposition. Separation from a true Church for her Corruptions is one Thing, and to ſeparate or withdraw from the Miniſtry of a particular Perſon in that Church is another Thing. The laſt may ſometimes be lawful when the firſt is not, tho' this is never to be done raſhly. Many Things, ſays the Reverend Mr. *Foſter* *, "will warrant Separation
" from ſuch a particular Miniſter or Congregation, which
" will not warrant Separation from the Church National." And there he cites *Durham* on *Scandal*, acknowledging, That, when Scandals become exceſſive, we may depart to another Congregation. The learned Principal *Rule*, in his *Rational Defence of Nonconformity* †, in Answer to *Stillingfleet*, ſays, "We aſſent to all the Thirty nine Articles,
" except theſe about Biſhops and Ceremonies; and we
" would not ſeparate from the Church becauſe of doctri-
" nal Miſtakes in theſe Things, if the Owning of them
" were not impoſed as the Terms of our Communion with
" her. But, ſays he, It is not ſo eaſy to perſwade us that
" there is no juſt Cauſe to withdraw from the Communion
" of ſome particular Pariſhes in *England*, where *Arminia-*
" *niſm* or *Socinianism* is commonly taught, where the Pra-
" ctice of Godlineſs is ridicul'd, and Principles, ſtriking
" at the Root of it, are inſtilled into the Hearers, &c." Mr. *Shields*, in his *Hind let looſe* ‡, cites the Author of the *Apologetical Relation*, ſaying, "Separation is one Thing, and
" not hearing ſuch or ſuch a Man is a far other Thing.
" There may be many juſt Grounds of Exception againſt
" a particular Perſon, why People may reſuſe to countenance
" him, without any Hazard of Separation, or joining with
" Se-

‡ *Due Right*, 253. 2d pt. * *Reſt. Inſtr. Conſul. Dial.* 3.
P. 7. † P. 92. ‡ P. 229.

Separatists in their Principles. Separation is one Thing; and refusing to attend the Ministry of such a Man is another Thing; for a Man may join with Ordinances in another Congregation, and so testify that he hath no Prejudice at the Ministry, but only against such a Man in particular." And the Church of Scotland seems to allow this in her *Seasonable Admonition* published 1698; when, in Reply to Separatists who objected the *untender, light and frothy* Conversation of some Ministers, she says, "But, tho' all this were true of some Ministers, doth this justify your Separation from all? How many worthy Ministers are there in the Congregations where you dwell, who are grave and edifying, and preach and practise Godliness in the Power of it, and yet you withdraw from them?" And I humbly think more may be yielded to a People in this Case, in a broken divided State of the Church as in our Day, than at another Time. Extraordinary Cases may admit of an unusual Cure.

9th Proposition. *Tho' there be Cases wherein People may lawfully withdraw from the Ministry of a particular Person, yet this is never to be but upon weighty Grounds; and, even when the Grounds are weighty, our separating is to be with Reluctancy and Grief of Heart, that we should be obliged in Conscience to separate or withdraw.* The above-cited Author of *Hind let loose* speaks well to this Purpose †, saying, "Tho' in some Cases as we are warranted, so we are necessitated to withdraw, yet neither do we allow it upon slight or slender Grounds; nor can any tender Soul be forced to discountenance the Ministers of Christ (I do not speak here of the Prelatick Curates) without great Reluctancy and Grief of Heart, even when the Grounds of it are solid and valid, and the Necessity unavoidable: Therefore we reject these as insufficient Grounds, besides what are given already.

1. We cannot withdraw from a Minister for his Infirmities and Weaknesses, natural, spiritual or moral.
2. Neither for personal Faults and Escapes; we expect a faithful but not a sinless Ministry. Nor,
3. For every Defect in Faithfulness, thro' Ignorance, want of Courage, Misinformation, or being biassed with Affection for particular Persons.

We do not hold that Faults in Members, or Defects in Ministers, do pollute the Ordinances, and so necessitate a Separation; but agree with what Mr. *Durham* says on *Revel. Chap. ii. Lect. 6. Sincerity*

B 2

"dis-

“ *discovered will cover many Faults.* 4. Nor for every Dis-
 “ *covery of Hypocrisy: Tho’ we may have Ground to sus-*
 “ *pect a Man’s Principle and Motive be not right, yet if he*
 “ *be following Duty unblameably, and have a lawful Call,*
 “ *what then? Notwithstanding every Way, whether in Pretence or*
 “ *in Truth, Christ is preached, therein we may rejoice, Phil. i. 18.*
 “ 5. Nor yet for real Scandals not attended with Obsti-
 “ *nacy, if Ministers will take Reproof and Admonition,*
 “ *and at least by doctrinal confessing, and practical for-*
 “ *saking them, satisfy the Offended, &c.”* And that
 Author, in his *Treatise of Church-Communion **, affirms,
 That only can be a Ground of Withdrawing or Separation,
 which is Ground of Deposition.

10th Proposition. *Tho’ some Things are more threatening to*
a Church in a declining Day, than when that Church is going
on in a Way of Reformation; yet it is not every wrong Step,
nor many wrong Steps, which will justify a Separation, albeit
a Church should be on the declining Hand, going backward in-
stead of forward. The Church of Corinth, the Church of
 Galatia, and the seven Asian Churches, were upon the
 Decline when the Apostles wrote Epistles to them; Yet
 nothing like Separation was ever enjoined to any in these
 Churches for all their Corruptions. And hence our worthy
 Ancestors, from 1596, in which Year (says Calderwood) our
 Sincere General Assemblies ended †, they continued in the
 Church without making Secession or Separation, tho’ still
 they struggled against her Defections; As did these Wor-
 thies, Messieurs Andrew Melvil, James Melvil, David
 Black, Robert Bruce, John Davidson, John Welsh, David
 Calderwood, and others. And till King James called up
 these eminent Servants of the Lord to Court, viz. Messieurs
 Andrew Melvil, James Melvil, James Balfour, William
 Scot, John Carmichael, Robert Wallace, Adam Coult and
 William Watson, he could never get his beloved Episco-
 pacy settled in Scotland. And the very Design of calling
 those Men to Court, and detaining them there, was, That
 in their Absence from the Judicatories of the Church (on
 which they still attended) the Episcopal Course might be
 advanced, and they were still detained till some Advantage
 was gotten for the Course of Conformity ||. They did
 not separate, tho’ then constant Moderators, Vote in Parliament
 by the Kirk and Bishops were brought in; still they testified
 against them. And this Defection and Backsliding was
 after the Church of Scotland had attained to a high Pitch in
 Reformation.

* P. 36. † P. 323. || *Gald. Hist. p. 519, 520.*

Reformation, as is evident from our Ecclesiastical History before that Time. *Petrie* tells *, That in the Beginning of 1596, "the Beauty of this Church, both for Purity of Doctrine, and Order of Discipline, was become admirable to the best reformed Churches; the Assemblies of the Believers were never more glorious and comfortable." And *Calderwood* speaks to the same Purpose †, when speaking of the Year 1596. And before this she was called, *The Morning-Star of the Reformation*. Mr. *M-Ward*, Author of *Naphtali*, speaking of the Work of God at that Time in this Church, says, *It was almost brought to Perfection* ‡. So they are surely in a Mistake, who say the Church of Scotland was then but in her Infancy. Her Defections indeed after that, for upwards of forty Years, were lamentable, and far more grievous than can be pretended at this Day; as is evident from *Calderwood's* History, particularly p. 402. where he instanceth six or seven remarkable Differences between our General Assemblies before 1597, and succeeding General Assemblies. And from the 464th Page, where he instanceth fourteen lamentable heavy Grievances which were drawn up by the Synod of *Fife*, to be laid before the Assembly in 1602. And for all the Corruptions in the Church for upwards of those forty Years, and the heavy Grievances under which they laboured at that Time; yet honest Men stayed in the Church contending against her Defections, without erecting themselves into different Judicatories, or any Thing like Separation: There is never a Word of that in all the Histories of those Times, notwithstanding of grievous Defections. And as at that Time eminent Men continued in the Church testifying against Defections, so the Lord gave remarkable Countenance to them in his Work, as the *Brethren* justly observe *, when they say, "Which Course of Defection continued for many Years without Interruption: Yet, during this Period of grievous Sinning and Backsliding, there were several eminent Men who witnessed against the same. Also, the Word of the Gospel was countenanced in several Corners of the Land, with more than ordinary Power and Success; particularly in several Places of the West of Scotland, Anno 1625, and at the Kirk of *Shots* in the Year 1630." Well, how did these several eminent Men witness against the grievous Sinning and Backsliding of their Day, whom the Lord thus remarkably countenanced? Was it not in a Way of Church-communion? tho' at that Time

* P. 517. Cent. 16. † p. 311. ‡ P. 54. * 2 Test. p. 17.

Time, as noticed above, there was not only the Kirk, taking Vote in Parliament, and constant Moderators, but also Bishops and Archbishops acting frequently in an arbitrary Way in the settling of Churches; and tho' at that Time it seems Elders were not allowed to sit with Ministers in Presbytery: For, in the Presbytery-register of *Kirkaldy*, of the Date September 13th 1638, 'tis said, "The Earl of Rothes" and Mr. Robert Douglas shew, that it was thought meet "be the Meiting at Coupar, Ruling Elders should sit with the Presbytery." And at that Time Error, particularly *Arminianism*, was rampant in this Church; and for writing against it in that Period, *Rutherford* was put from his Charge, and sent Prisoner to *Aberdeen* where he was confined, as appears from his first Letter. Then no Separation, tho', as the Brethren of *Fife* and *Perth* declare in their *Testimony* *, Prelates were in high Power, a *Service-book* and *Book of Canons* were obtruded, and the greatest Part of the Ministry carried away with the Course of Conformity, and couching with *Isaachar* under the Burden. Yea, in former Times of great Defections, worthy Ministers were so far from thinking it Duty to separate and erect themselves in separate Judicatories, that when Court and Kirk would had them forsake these Judicatories, they still attended and opposed sinful Measures taken in them at that Time. Hence, in 1607, when Mr. *John Carmichael* had obtained Licence from the King to return to Scotland, it was with this express Condition, That he should not go to Presbyteries and Synods: And when Mr. *Henry Livingston* was summoned before the Council that same Year for the Proceedings at *Perth* Synod, and had obtained the Favour to be warded or confined in his own Parish, it was with an Instruction, That he should not repair to Presbytery nor Synod till his Majesty's further pleasure was known †. And because honest Ministers attended Presbyteries, therefore the King came at length to discharge them altogether ||.

In former Times of greatest Defection in this Church, our worthy Ancestors, Christ's faithful zealous Ambassadors, made a noble and resolute Stand against all In-croachments and Corruptions; but still in a Way of Church-communion. And the Author of the *Apologetical Relation*, said to have been the Reverend Mr. *John Brown* Author of the *History of the Indulgence*, with the Assistance of Mr. *Livingston* and Mr. *M'Ward*, and Mr. *James Stewart's* Help as to the Law-part thereof, vindicates their Conduct in

* P. 15. † *Cald. Hist.* p. 569. || *Cald.* p. 625.

in this, p. 100. saying, "When the Prelates were brought
 " in upon them, Ministers were then bound to keep Pos-
 " session of their Rights so long as they could, by meeting
 " in the Judicatories, there being no Restraint laid upon
 " them by Law from speaking their Mind freely, and pro-
 " testing as they saw Occasion. — They were in a Capaci-
 " ty to do some Things for vindicating Church-privileges,
 " at least for exonerating their own Consciences; yea, and
 " for curbing in a great Part the Prelates Power." And
 as this was the Practice of the Lord's Servants and People
 in the Church of *Scotland* in former Times, so likewise of
 his Servants in the Church of *England*: For the *Dissenters*,
 as all History gives Account, had never separated from the
 Church of *England*, if they had not been required expres-
 sly to declare their Assent and Consent to what is culpable
 in her Constitution, or signify their Approbation thereof.
 Tho' in the above Proposition I have narrated Matter of
 Fact, and shown what was the Practice of our worthy
 Ancestors who remained in the Church of *Scotland* in the
 midst of most lamentable Defections, from 1597 to 1638,
 and told what were the Sentiments of eminent Ministers of
 Christ in the Church of *England*, yet I have not declared
 my own Opinion in Relation to their Conduct, nor told
 what I should reckon Duty, were Things come to such a
 Pass with us as in their Days, which God forbid they ever
 should; yet it naturally follows, such as remained in Judi-
 catories in that Period, they could never have entertain'd a
 Thought of Separation from us at this Day.

11th Proposition. "Tho' the greatest Part of a Church,
 " Ministers and People should make sad Defection, that will
 " not be sufficient Ground of Separation from her, while no
 " sinful Terms of Communion are required of us." The
 Church of *Sardis* was generally corrupted, Rev. iii. 1, 2,
 3, 4. for there were but a few Names even in *Sardis* that
 had not defiled their Garments; and, whatever Name most
 of their Ministers had to live, yet they were dead, formal
 and hypocritical, having fallen, it seems, from their former
 Liveliness, Zeal and Tenderness; yet, in Christ's Epistle
 to her, no Word of separating from that Church, no Pre-
 cept, no Allowance for this, even in *Sardis*. 'Tis thought
 that *Sardis* had once been one of the most famous Churches
 of Christ in all *Asia*, yet only a few Names even in *Sardis*;
 sad Apostasy! Yet God had a true Church there, even in
 that Place, in the Time of most lamentable Defection; and
 there is no Command given to these few Names to separate,

or

or make a Seceſſion from others; no Encouragement given for erecting themſelves into another Church. And ſo our worthy Anceſtors, from 1597 to 1637 or to 1638, they continued in the Church of Scotland ſtruggling againſt Deſections in a Way of Church-communion, when the Generality, or greateſt Part of the Miniſters had deſiled their Garments: And therefore, in our Day, tho' it ſhould be granted there are only a few Names in Scotland that have not deſiled their Garments, that will not ſay we ought to ſeparate or make a Seceſſion from her: But, I hope, 'tis far from this; for, as noticed above, the Reverend Mr *Ebenezer Erſkine* owns, in his Answer to the Remarks of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, there is yet a great Body of faithful Miniſters in the Church of Scotland, and a vaſt many of them that have had both God's Call and the Church's Call. And I pray the Lord of the Harveſt may increaſe their Number.

12th Proposition. "Where a Church has turned ſo corrupt that we cannot have Communion with her without Sin, in that Caſe, ſuch as ſeparate, tho' the ſmaller Party by far, they are the true Church; and, tho' they ſeparate, they are not the Separatiſts, for, 'tis certain, in ſuch a Caſe, the Fault or Crime of *Schiſm* is in theſe that occasion it." And, no doubt, as *Rutherford* ſays *, "When the greateſt Part of a Church makes Deſection from the Truth, the leſſer Part remaining ſound, the greateſt Part is the Church of Separatiſts." Surely he means of declared Deſections from the Truth in Fundamentals; for, in the immediately preceeding Paragraph, he ſays, "There is no juſt Cauſe to leave a leſs clean Church (if it be a true Church) and go to a purer and a cleaner." 'Tis certain, Deſection from the Truth in leſſer Things doth not unchurch a People; However, when Deſection from the Truth is made in Fundamentals, and her Standards of Doctrine are corrupted, and we required to approve thereof, that alters the Caſe: As in the Caſe of the Church of *Rome* before the *Reformation*; then ſuch as adhered to her were the Separatiſts, and not ſuch as made a Seceſſion or Separation from her. God's Witneſſes may be few, and yet the true Church, as in *Elijah's* Days, or when one *Athanaſius*, with a ſmaller Party, oppoſed the *Arian* World.

I'll add one Proposition more, and 'tis this, "That the Party having Truth upon their Side may be the ſinful Cauſe of Separation, and more to be blamed for the Division than

* *Due Right*, P. 255.

“ that Party which was first in Fault, and had made the Defection: And that Part of the Wall of the House which standeth, may be more to blame than that Part which hath fallen.” Not that it should have fallen with the other, but because in Matters of Schism or Separation it may happen that the Defection or Error may be in one Part, and yet that other Part, which makes the Rent and separates, may be guilty of the Schism: The Fault or Error for which the Rent is made, tho’ really a Fault or Error, yet not being *tanti*, or such as is relevant to found a Schism, or be sufficient Ground for Separation; or, when the Fault may be of greater Weight, yet the Schism is carried on in a hasty and heady Way. And so much *Durham* on Scandal affirms †.

CH A P. III.

Where some Things are instanced, which, tho’ just Ground for Fasting, Mourning and Lamentation, yet are not sufficient Causes of Separation from a Church of Christ.

AND, 1st, Albeit there be Errors, and Errors of a hainous Nature among some in a Church, this is not sufficient Ground of Separation from that Church, nay, not tho’ these Errors should remain uncensured: For, as was noticed above, there were some in the Church of *Corinth* who had drunk in this gross Error, *That there is no Resurrection of the Body*; hence the Apostle asks, *How say some among you, there is no Resurrection of the Dead* || 2 The Interrogation plainly intimates, there were some among them who denied that great and fundamental Doctrine of the Christian Religion; and yet this Church of *Corinth* was a true Church of *Christ*, from which it was not lawful to separate. So, in the Church of *Pergamos*, there were some uncensured who held the Doctrine of *Balaam*, and the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans*; and yet she was a true Church of *Christ*, right and approven in the main. So, in the Church of *Tbyatira*, *That wicked Woman Jezebel* was tolerated without being censured, tho’ she taught the Lord’s Servants to commit hainous Iniquity. So, tho’ there should

† Part 4. Chap. I. || 1 *Cor.* xv. 12.

be sundry Persons leavened with gross Errors in the Church of Scotland at this Day, this is no sufficient Ground for a Secession or Separation from her. I own it is a Sin, and I think a very hainous Sin in any Church, to wink at Errors, or not to censure for, and be zealous against them, especially if of a hainous Nature, as are some of these wherewith some among us have been charged; yet it is unaccountable to charge the Church of Scotland as Favourers of these Errors, seeing never so much as one Person in any of the Judicatories of this Church offered to vindicate or plead for any of these. 'Tis true, there were long Debates in some Meetings, anent sustaining the Relevancy of the Articles libelled against P. S. but those were from the different Glosses put by different Persons upon his Words and Answers; but I never heard of any pleading in Vindication of his Words, when taken in an unsound erroneous Sense. *Durbam*, in commenting upon the Epistle to the Church of *Pergamos*, having asserted, "Men may be very straight and tender in the Work of God, and bold in reference to Suffering, and yet be faint and defective in the prosecuting of Church-censures against erroneous Men;" he puts the Question, "What can be the Reason, that honest, tender and zealous Men should be so often defective in this, who yet may be zealous and fervent against scandalous Practices?" In Answer to which he gives sundry Reasons, as, "1st, It is more difficult to get the Impression of the Odiousness of corrupt Doctrine on the Heart, than of gross outward Practices.——2^{dly}, Pursuing of Persons that are erroneous hath often little Fruit with it as to the Persons themselves, there being but few that are recovered out of that Snare of the Devil, and to whom God giveth Repentance,---who once deliberately oppose themselves to the Truth.---This makes that even sometimes good Men, out of Fear of the Inconveniencies that may follow, and the Difficulties that accompany such a Work, may be too prone to oversee and forbear them, &c." And, in his Treatise on *Scandal*, he hath more to this Purpose *. And, as *Owen* justly (*Eq. P. 174.*) observes, "There may be a fundamental Error in a true Church for a Season, where the Church erreth not fundamentally." Citing, for Proof of this, *1 Cor. x. 2 Tim. ii. 18.*

2^{dly}, Tho' there be many corrupt Members, and some who are guilty of open scandalous Offences, and these un-

* Part 2. Chap. 12. Part 3. Chap. 2.

censured by Church-officers; yet this will not warrant Separation. The Church of *Corinth* was egregiously faulty here, when some in that Church was guilty of the atrocious Crime of Incest, and the incestuous Person who had his Father's Wife was not censured as he deserved, by being excommunicated and *delivered unto Satan* *; Yea, and some among them, instead of being humbled and lying in the Dust for this, were puffed up, and boasted, perhaps of their Attainments, or of their Purity, or of having such a Person among them; for he might be a Man of great Parts, and the like: Yet the Apostle never says, If that incestuous Person be not cast out, come out from the Communion of that Church; far from it. And tho' in this Church some also were drunk when they came to the Lord's Table, yet the Apostle beseeches them in *the Name of the Lord Jesus, that there be no Divisions among them*, 1 Cor. i. 10. He was against Separation notwithstanding of these Immoralities. It is the Sin of Church-officers if they neglect to censure the Scandalous, and God will require it at their Hand; yet their Omissions will not justify a Separation from the Church, nor from any of the Ordinances thereof: And if People have done their Duty, endeavouring to have such censured by *telling the Church*, they may safely keep Communion, and join with that Church, so as to sit at a Communion-table in it. Indeed People ought, as to mourn over, so to testify against the untender immoral Walk of others, by private Admonitions and Exhortations; and, if that prevail not, they may and ought to lay the Affair before the Office-bearers of Christ's House; and if that prevail not, as *Durham* says ‡, "They may communicate it to other Church-officers; and no Redress following, it is their Duty to follow it before the competent superior Judicatories: For Christ's Direction, *Tell the Church*, importeth and warranteth the same." And then he puts the Question, *What further is to be done if that fail?* To which he answers, "We know no other publick Redress; for Christ hath left it there, and so may we also: Neither can it be instructed from Scripture, that Christ hath appointed Separation to be the next Step of a private Person's Duty for removing of Offences." And there he shows, "A private Person must either acquiesce, as being exonerated, when he hath followed the Action before the Church; or he shall have no Ground of Peace any-
C 2 " where

* 1 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. ‡ On *Scand.* Part 2. Chap. xiii. p. m. 134. See also Chap. xii. p. 129.

" where till he be out of the World, or out of all visible
 " Churches: And so also there can be no other Way of
 " keeping publick Order and Ordinances, and of eviting
 " Scandal and Confusion. This Truth is fully made out,
 " *says he*, by these three worthy and pious Divines of
 " *New-England, Cotton, Hooker and Norton.*" And then he
 " *cites Norton, saying*, " There was Impurity or Corrupt-
 " tion in Worship in the Church of *Corinth*; for Women
 " taught in the Church: There was corrupt Doctrine;
 " many denied the Resurrection. In Manners she was
 " most corrupt, there being so many Fornications, Sects,
 " palpable Love of the World, &c. Yet the Apostle did
 " not command those that were worthily prepared to ab-
 " stain from the Supper; but, rectifying Abuses, he did
 " command every one to try himself, and so to eat." And
 " he hath much to this Purpose in his Treatise upon *Scandal* †.
 " Again, on the *Revelation* ||, he says, " Altho' a Church be
 " defective in purging out of corrupt Members, yet that
 " doth not pollute the Ordinances to others, or necessitate
 " them to separate from them. These Churches continue
 " to be Churches, and the Ordinances to be Ordinances
 " of Christ, altho' such were continued in Communion
 " with them; and, notwithstanding thereof, these who
 " were free of those Corruptions are approven and com-
 " mended by Jesus Christ: And if it were not so, that a
 " Person's endeavouring in his Station to amend such a
 " Fault, and to have such Scandals censured, did not ex-
 " empt him from Guiltiness so as to continue in Church-
 " communion, altho' the Plurality of Officers should be
 " short of their Duty in that respect; then there might
 " be still Separation after Separation *in infinitum*." The
 " Reverend Mr. *Boston* speaks to the same Purpose in his Ser-
 " mon on 1 Cor. x. 17. And the Churches of *New-England*,
 " in their *Platform of Church-Discipline*, are large, pointed and
 " particular on this Head, whose Words may be cited
 " afterwards.

3dly, Tho' a Church make sundry wrong Decisions in
 " Judicatories, that's not sufficient Ground of Separation.
 " The Assemblies of this Church, from 1638 to 1649 *inclusive*,
 " made sundry such. As the General Assembly 1638 *
 " enacted, " That from that Time henceforth no sort of Per-
 " son of whatsoever Quality or Degree be permitted to
 " speak or write against the said Confession ‡, this Assem-
 " bly,

† Part 2. Chap. xii. || Chap. ii. p. m. 99. * Sess. 23.
 24. ‡ That is, the *National Covenant*.

“ bly, or any Act of this Assembly; and that under the
 “ Pain of incurring the Censures of this Kirk.” Now,
 tho’ all our Separatists wonderfully magnify the *Acts* of
 Assemblies during that Period, yet I dare say, they cannot
 instance an *Act* since that Time which is more unreason-
 able than this; for hereby, some would say, they act as
 looking on themselves to be infallible in their Decisions,
 and also bind themselves to act by *implicite Faith*: For, after
 this *Act*, that Assembly made sundry Acts; yet not a Word
 was to be spoken nor written against them under the Pain
 of Censure, tho’ many of the Acts of that Assembly were
 unjustifiable, as may be shown afterwards. And that *Act*
 looks very like a Restricting of Ministerial Freedom: And
 some who mightily extol these Acts, would call it down-
 right Tyranny if any such *Act* was made at this Time.
 This Act might be thought grievous, yet never any dream’d
 it was Ground of Separation: And to say with some, that
 a Church may be excused or born with tho’ she make bad
 Acts and do bad Things when going forward, but not
 when she is declining, in my Opinion is of no Weight. A-
 gain, tho’ the *Commission* in 1650, and the subsequent As-
 sembly approved by Vote of the *publick Resolutions*, yet
 the *Protesters* did not think this a Ground of Separation,
 as all the Histories of these Times evidence. And Mr.
Hog, in his *Letters anent Separation*, p. 7. says, The *Pro-*
testers were still willing to sit in Judicatories with the *Reso-*
lutioners. The Act of Assembly 1732, in my Opinion, was
 a bad Act; but it was not Ground of Separation from this
 Church, nor from any Minister that voted for it, more than
 was the Act of Assembly 1642, whereby that Assembly o-
 bliged all Presbyteries to give a Leit of six Persons to every
 Patron. And the passing of that Act 1732 was no such E-
 vidence of the general Corruption of this Church, as is al-
 ledged: For, as the Brethren observe in their *Representa-*
tion to the Commission, p. 17. “ The far greater Part of the
 “ Presbyteries of this Church who sent up Instructions were
 “ against that Act; ” There being only Six of all the Sixty
 eight Presbyteries that declared for it in that Shape in which
 it pass’d. And the Brethren in their first *Testimony*, p. 50.
 affirm, That this Act was “ so far from being approved by
 “ all at home, or from being agreeable to the more gene-
 “ ral Opinion of this Church, that the most Part of the
 “ Presbyteries did declare themselves against it in the
 “ Terms it now stands. ”

ably,

4thly, Tho' the Ministers of a Church should be guilty of much Fainting, Flinching and unworthy Declining, or of not giving faithful Testimony against that in others; yet this will not be a sufficient Ground for Separation from them. Tho' Peter and Barnabas were thus guilty when they separated from the Gentile Converts, for fear of offending the Jews, when convinced it was both lawful and Duty to eat and to keep Fellowship with them, for which the Apostle Paul withstood them to the Face, because they were to be blamed: Yet had these Gentiles cast at their Ministry, tearing their Commission, by refusing to hear or submit to them; this had surely been their Sin. A faultless Ministry or blameless Church is not to be expected upon Earth; And what is cited from the *Hind let loose* on the foregoing 9th Proposition may be considered here. As also what the Reverend Mr. M^r Ward says in his Letter from Holland to the Society People in Scotland is of Weight*: Where, speaking of the Faintings and Flinchings and unworthy Declinings of Ministers, in not giving a faithful Testimony, he says to that People; "Ye are to be wary while ye eye these, viz. these Faintings and Flinchings, and unworthy Declinings of Ministers, that ye be not thereby drawn, 1. To a Contempt of the Ministry itself. 2. Into that Delusion, to think that it is the only Way to testify against what ye judge amiss in the Minister, to cast at his Ministry, to withdraw frae him: Whosoever adopts this Principle accordingly, hath not the Mind of Christ; for there are other patent and obvious Ways to witness against all the Evils of our Ways besides these. Nay, this Way of Witnessing is such as Christ will witness against it, as not the Way."

5thly, Tho' a Church hath fallen in a great Measure from her former Love and Zeal, that's no sufficient Ground of Separation, tho' 'tis the justest Ground for Lamentation. The once famous Church of *Ephesus* fell from her first Love, yet still a Church of Christ, from which it was not lawful to separate, *Rev. ii. 4.* So the Church of *Laodicea*, which was turned lukewarm, and a Church in which we read of nothing commendable, yet Christ was still in treating Terms with her, standing at the Door and knocking, *Rev. iii. 20.* And while Christ stays and is in treating Terms with a Church, we ought not to separate from her, her Standards being pure, and no sinful Term of Communion required. In all the Epistles to the *Asian Churches*, there

* Printed at the End of his *Earn. Contend.*

there is not the least Word dropt to encourage any in Separation from them, for all their Faults, which were great and numerous.

6thly, Want of sensible Edification is not enough to occasion Separation from Ministers of a becoming Conversation, and who preach *Jesur*. Some may be ready to think, surely the Lord has forsaken the Minister, and therefore they ought to forsake him because they are not so sensibly edified. But it would be considered, People may be edified by the Gospel, when yet they are not ravished with Joy in hearing: If the Judgment be more informed in the Doctrines of the Gospel; if more sensible of, or more humbled for, Iniquity; if the Heart be more drawn out after an absent Christ; if help'd to follow on to know the Lord, there is surely Edification reaped, tho' there be not sensible Enlargement in Hearing. And here People would try narrowly, whether the Fault be not in themselves; God may be contending for misimproving former Favours, or perhaps 'tis for the Provocations of Hearers that Ministers are not more enlarged and lively, or want of Edification may flow from conceived Prejudice at the Pastor. Sundry of the People of *Geneva* conceived such Prejudice at *Calvin* as they would not hear him, so that he was forced to leave them. Perhaps the Minister's Light differs in sundry Things from them, or from some Ministers for whom they have a vast Veneration; and, because he goes not along with them in what they reckon a Work of Reformation, they conclude such a Minister hath drawn back; whereas perhaps his *Record is in Heaven*, his Sentiments are the same they formerly were, and is not conscious of making any visible wrong Step to occasion Offence, nor can he think but the Lord of sovereign Grace is with him in ministerial Work still.

2. Whether we be sensibly edified, having Communion and Fellowship with God in Ordinances dispensed by such or such a Minister, is not to be our Rule for attending upon his Ministry: For Mr. *Shields* says *, "This is a very uncertain Rule; for he may give his Presence where he does not approve of the Minister, and he may approve of the Minister where he does not give his Presence; and if he be absent, it is uncertain whether it be the Minister's Fault or our own. And upon that Ground the other Party may be justified in dividing from us, because they may miss his Presence among us and in our Meetings."

* *Church Com.* p. 49, 50.

" ings; his Presence in Communion is the End of our Meet-
 " ings, and not the Rule: The Meeting is always lawful,
 " and may have the Expectation of his Presence, that is
 " gathered in his Name; and none can say the Meeting of
 " Presbyterian Ministers in Scotland at this Time, in these
 " Circumstances, are gathered in any other Name. How-
 " ever, if we would expect the Blessing, let us endeavour
 " Unity; for that is as the Dew of Hermon, and there the
 " Lord commands the Blessing, Psal. cxxxiii. ult." The
 Apostle was not forsaken of his Lord when the *Galatians*,
 who had received him as an *Angel of God*, yea, even as
Christ Jesus, and were ready to have pluck'd out their own
Eyes and given them to him, became his Enemies, and look'd
 upon him as their Enemy, because he told them the Truth,
 preaching the Truths of Christ contrary to what some who
zealously affected them did teach: Upon which he asks,
Where is the Blessedness you spake of? Formerly they recko-
 ned themselves blessed in his Ministry, looking on him as
 a most blessed Person *. Again, even those in the Church
 of *Corinth* the Apostle had espoused to Christ for a Hus-
 band, they conceived such Prejudice against him, as to think
 he was scarcely worth the Hearing, being so taken with o-
 ther Teachers, as to say of him, *His bodily Presence is weak,*
and his Speech contemptible †. So that, for his own Vindi-
 cation, he was obliged to write at large, as in the 10th,
 11th, 12th and 13. Chapters of his second Epistle to them.
*I am become a Fool, says he, in glorying; but ye have com-
 pelled me.* Seeing they had not stood up in his Vindication, but
 instead of that had talked to his Grief, he saw a Necessary
 of vindicating himself.

3. I own the want of Edification is much to be lamented:
 And as sometimes this may be the Peoples Fault, so some-
 times Ministers may have a deep and sinful Hand in this.
 Nor shall I say but at this Day there may be much Ground
 to lament over a dead Ministry in many Places; yet our
 Deadness is not such as can vindicate any in Separation from
 the Church of *Scotland*, for 'tis God's preceptive and not
 his providential Will which is to be our Rule. *Ruther-
 ford*, in his Letter to the Parishoners of *Kilmacolme*, says,
 " Whereas ye complain of a dead Ministry in your Bounds,
 " — make Christ your Minister, he can woo a Soul at a Dike-
 " side in the Field: He needs not us, howbeit the Flock
 " is obliged to seek him in the Shepherd's Tents. Hunger

* *Gal.* iv. 14, 15, 16, 17. † *2 Cor.* x. 10.

" of Christ's making may thrive, even under Stewards who
 " mind not the Feeding of the Flock, &c."

4. Ministers and People may be in the Way of the Lord;
 and yet fall under lamentable Deadness. Hence *Rutherford*
foord in 1653, in his 57th Letter, Part 3d, to Colonel *Ker*,
 says, " It is the Complaint of not a few of such who were
 " in Christ before me, that most of us inhabit and dwell in
 " a parched Land; the People of the Lord are like a
 " Land not rained upon, Tho' some dare not deny but this
 " is the Garden of the Beloved, and the Vineyard which
 " the Lord doth keep and water every Moment; Yet,
 " O where are the sometimes quickning Breathings and
 " Influences from Heaven that have refreshed his hidden
 " ones! The Causes of his Withdrawings are unknown to
 " us." And much more he hath to the same Purpose in
 " that Letter. And this was after his joining in the *Prote-*
station against the *publick Resolutions*, the Letter being written
 in 1653. And in his 67th Letter, Part 2d, which is to the
 Lady *Kenmure*, of the Date *May* 26th 1659, says, " There is
 " an universal Complaint of Deadness of Spirit on all that
 " know God. He that writes to you, Madam, is as deep
 " in this as any." And I think Mr. *Renwick*, in some of his
 Letters, laments to that same Purpose in his Day.

The Author of the late *Seasonable Testimony*, speaking to
 the People, P. 55. says, " I have heard some of you con-
 fess, that, notwithstanding your following the separating
 " Brethren, particularly at Communion, you have not
 " found that composed Frame and solid Work of Reli-
 " gion which sometimes you observed with Comfort." And others
 have heard the same Complaint from sundry: Nor have we heard of any extraordinary Pouring out of
 the Spirit attending the Ministry of our Brethren, more
 than others; few pricked at the Heart, crying out, *Men,*
and Brethren, what shall we do to be saved?

But, to conclude this third Head, as Mr. *Shields* says *,
 " It is evident, that there may be Union and Communion
 " with a Church, where there are several Corruptions
 " neither confessed nor reformed.—As for Example,
 " there may be Difference of Judgment about many
 " Things,—and doctrinal Determinations of disputable
 " Points exacted by Synods, contrary to our Sentiments;
 " and yet there may be Forbearance with Protestations, if
 " we be not constrained to subscribe or homologate the
 " same. In Worship there may be many Defects and Dis-
 " orders."

D
 * On Church-Com, P. 40.

orders.—In Discipline and Government there may be
 “ many Dissatisfactions with Church-officers, unjust Cen-
 “ sures, unfit Ordinations, erroneous Decisions, wrong
 “ Constitutions of Judicatories, Dissatisfactions with Per-
 “ sons that have the main Stroke in the Administrations,
 “ occasioning Jealousies and Fears of Misgovernment
 “ for the Time to come, and the like.” And yet, for all
 these, there he proves at Length, there ought to be Union
 and Communion without Separation.

CHAP. IV.

*In which sundry Things, reckoned just
 and sufficient Causes for Separation
 from a Church, are instanced.*

AND, 1st, When a Church turns heretical in her Do-
 ctine, maintaining such Doctrines in her Standards
 as are everlive of the Foundation, utterly inconsis-
 tent with Salvation; or denies such Truths, without the
 Knowledge and Faith whereof we cannot have Life and
 endless Happiness; as if they should deny the Deiry of
 our Lord Jesus, deny the Necessity of supernatural Reve-
 lation in order to our attaining to saving Knowledge of
 the Will of God, or deny Justification solely by the Surety's
 imputed everlasting Righteousness, and the like. But I
 hope, yea, and am confident, nothing like these is to be
 found in the Church of Scotland; for she adheres to all the
 Doctrines contained in our excellent *Confession of Faith*, and
 her Teachers, when licensed to preach the Gospel, are
 solemnly engaged to “ Assert, maintain and defend the
 “ Doctrine contained in the said *Confession*:” And also,
 at their Ordination, of new they come under the same En-
 gagements; and do expressly disown “ All Popish, Arian,
 “ Socinian, Arminian, Bourignon, and other Doctrines,
 “ Tenets and Opinions whatsoever, which are contrary to,
 “ and inconsistent with the foresaid *Confession of Faith*.”
 And, if there be such abominable Hypocrites acting below
 Men, as profess, promise and engage contrary to what may
 be their Sentiments, this is to be lamented, but cannot be
 absolutely prevented in any Church; there was a Traitor
 and vile Hypocrite, a Judas, among the twelve Apostles
 whom our Lord sent forth to teach and preach in his Name:
 And

And yet 'tis not every Error in a Church, nor every Error which may be more gross in the particular Members or Ministers thereof, which is Ground of Separation from a Church. And hence the learned *Turretine*, when speaking of the Causes of Separation or Secession from a Church, tho' he makes *Heresy in Doctrine* a just Cause thereof, yet says, "Separation is not to be made for any light or smaller Error, but for mo deadly and capital Errors, which strike at the Heart and Foundation of Faith and Salvation: *Sed plures exitiales & capitales qui cor salutis & fidei fundamentum petant.*" And, I think, we may defy the World to instance any capital Error which is maintained by the Church of *Scotland*. As to what hath been laid to the Charge of the Professors *Simson* and *Campbell*, may be noticed afterwards.

2dly, Idolatry in Worship is reckoned a sufficient Ground of Separation from a Church: It is sinful to join in any Worship which is corrupt. *Turretine* asserts this is just Ground of Separation, yet he doth not reckon every Thing which is amiss in Worship sufficient Ground: Hence he says, *Non superstitio duntaxat, sed infamis idololatria.* And *Burroughs* on *Hosea*, Chap. ii. 2. says, He doth not think that all Idolatry (if it be thro' Ignorance) cutteth off a Church. I'm of their Opinion who think, we are to separate from all false and corrupt Worship in any Church, tho' every Corruption in Worship is not sufficient Ground of Separation: Yet, where *Superstition*, *Will-worship*, or *uninstituted Ceremonies* are enjoined, and made necessary to our communicating with a Church, we are rather to separate than join in such Worship; for, *In vain*, and sinfully, *do all such worship the Lord as teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, Mat. xv. 9. But the greatest Adversaries of the Church of *Scotland* cannot charge her as being guilty of *Idolatry*, nay, not of *Superstition* in her Worship; And if, at Times, some of her Members be guilty of joining with the Church of *England*, so as to comply with any of her *Superstitions* and *uninstituted Ceremonies*, that is their Sin: Yet the Church of *Scotland* doth not approve of this by any Deed of hers; yea, so far from this, that she hath formally resisted and cautioned against it, the Commission in 1709 having, by an Act against Innovations in the Worship of God, expressly discharged it; which Act was read by their Appointment from the several Pulpits in this Church: And that Commission was approved by the subsequent Assembly.

3dly, Tyranny in the Government of a Church is reckoned just Ground of Separation by some: And as *Turretius* mentions only three Grounds or Causes for Separation, viz. Heresy in Doctrine, and Idolatry in Worship; so Tyranny in Government is the third. And it is not every *Anarchy* or Disorder in the Government of a Church, or Exercise of Discipline, which according to him is Ground of Separation; *Sed tyrannis durissima & intolerabilis persecutio tum corporalis tum spiritualis*; But most cruel Tyranny, and intolerable Persecution both of Body and Soul. But I hope there is nothing like that to be found in the Church of Scotland, I know, such as separate themselves are ready to object what they call the bloody cruel Sentences pronounced against Messieurs *Mc Millan*, *McNeill*, *Hepburn*, *Gilchrist* and *Taylor*; But, as these were pronounced about twenty Years ago, so, albeit I should grant they were cruel and unjust, that will not prove the Church of Scotland ought to be separated from at this Day. Here I shall not spend Time in considering the Equity of the Sentences past against these Ministers: But if the Methods taken by them, as Mr. *Webster* affirms ‡ of the Methods taken by Mr. *Mc Millan*, had a natural Tendency to ruine the Church of Scotland entirely; and if the Schism carried on by them was, as he asserts, one of the most scandalous, pernicious and unaccountable Schisms that perhaps ever was known in any Age of the Church; then it was the less to be admired that the Church of Scotland pronounced such Sentences against them, lest she should be entirely ruined. And Mr. *Webster* says of Mr. *Mc Millan*, That it was for his antisciptural and anticovenanted Principles, together with his irregular Practice, that the Church of Scotland declared him to be none of her Communion.

I doubt not it will also be objected, The Church of Scotland of late, namely in 1733, acted tyrannically, in that she cast out the *Four Brethren* from her Communion for their honest Testimony against her unjust Proceedings. Answer, I was and am sorry ever such a Sentence was past, whereby these Brethren were cast out from the Communion of this Church; and yet some have thought (how justly I cannot say) their Ejection was not a Deed of this Church, and that it was only thro' a Mistake they were ejected: For then it was, and still it is the Sentiment of sundry, If that Commission had done as was done by our *Scots Council* 1676, when they divided in Vote, *Whether to press the DECLARA-*

‡ Letter to Mr. *Mc Millan*,

RATION *against the Covenants, or the Bond of Peace?*
 When the Rolls, thro' the Importunity of Sir Robert Murray, were called three Times upon the same Vote, and found at third Calling to have carried contrary to what was given out at first and second Calling of the Rolls to have the Majority, then there had not been Need of the Moderator's casting Vote; tho' the Gentleman who marked the Votes at that Time in the Commission is known by all to be a Gentleman of much Honour and Honesty, and never any had the least Suspicion of his Fidelity: But, whatever may be in this, 'tis certain there was an evident Majority of Ministers in the Commission who voted against that Deed. But when it is granted that Sentence was unjust and tyrannical, it will not prove the Church of Scotland is so tyrannical that she ought to be separated from; for he is not a Tyrant who is guilty of a few Acts of Oppression, but he who is habitually guilty of them in his Administration. "A Tyrant, says *Rutherford* *, is he who habitually sins against the Catholick Good of the Subjects and State, and subverteth Law." And I think none will say the Church of Scotland is habitually guilty of Tyranny and intolerable Persecution, whether of Soul or Body. Now those three, viz. Damnable Heresy, gross Idolatry, and Tyranny with intolerable Persecution, have been esteemed by many to be the only Grounds of Separation from a Church. And the learned *Camero* having mentioned those three as just Causes thereof, he adds another Cause, namely, when a Church is the Seat of *Antichrist*. And the Ministers and Elders of the Provincial Synod which met at London in 1649, in their *Vindication of Presbyterian Government*, p. 114. having instanced those from *Camero* as Causes of Separation, they affirm, "Where none of those are to be found, there the Separation is insufficient and schismatical." And I'm sure none of them is to be found in this Church. Yet sundry other Things are instanced by some; as,

1stly, Some make the *Intrusion of Ministers upon Christian Congregations* a Ground of Separation; and sundry of the Dissenters from the Church of England have judged the want of a free Choice in the Election of their own Pastors, is enough to vindicate them in separating from the Communion of that Church, where all are settled by Patrons. But other learned and judicious Writers are of a different Judgment; as the Reverend Principal *Rule*, who says †,

* *Lex Rex*, p. 217. † *Rat. Def.* p. 151.

“ Depriving People of their Right of chusing their own
 “ Church-officers is Matter of Complaint; but we must
 “ bear it, rather than separate for that from a Church.”
 And again ||, speaking of the Members of the Church of
England their being deprived of Right to chuse their Pa-
 stors, he says, “ I do not make depriving the People of this
 “ Power a Cause of separating, tho’ I reckon it a notable
 “ Grievance,— and pray the Lord may move the Hearts
 “ of Rulers to defend the People in this their Right a-
 “ gainst them that take it from them.” Others, as the
 Author of the *modest Apology* in Answer to the Bishop of
Derry, tho’ they do not affirm ’tis Ground of Separation,
 yet say, “ It is a great Discouragement to be of the Com-
 “ munion of that Church where Ministers enter not to
 “ their Charge by the Election of the People.” And no
 doubt it is so.

Now, the Charge of violent Intrusions, in my Opinion,
 is a Charge from which the Church of *Scotland* can least
 be vindicated of any Thing laid to her Charge since the
 Revolution; considering how many Settlements have been
 made *venitente & contradicente ecclesia*, while Congregations
 were reclaiming since the *Act* restoring Patronages in 1712.
 I confess, we have just Ground to lament over these; yet,
 as there hath been a considerable Struggle made by many
 Ministers of this Church against them, and a considerable
 Stop hath been put to them for some Time bygone, so,
 whatever Ground there is for Lamentation, there is no
 sufficient Ground of Separation from the Church of *Scot-*
land notwithstanding of such Intrusions; whatever some
 particular Congregations may have to say for vindicating
 their Practice, in not attending upon the Ministry of
 such as have been violently thrust in upon them.
 For me, my Sentiments are the same as formerly, as to the
 Peoples Right to elect their Pastors; only I see, as Mr.
Burroughs says, “ It is exceeding hard for a People to un-
 “ derstand their own Liberty without abusing of it, either
 “ against a Church, or against the Officers of a Church *.”
 And as published formerly †, with our Divines who write
 upon this Head, still I humbly think, “ That tho’ a Per-
 “ son hath been thrust in upon a People in an undue Man-
 “ ner, yet their After-acceptance, Approbation and Sub-
 “ mission to his Ministry, makes him a Pastor to them, sup-
 “ plying the Want of Election at first; as *Jacob’s* After-
 “ consent and Acceptance of *Leah* made her to be his
 “ Wife,

" Wife, tho' he was far from chusing her at first. And
 " tho' it be a Sin in Ministers of the Gospel to settle any
 " Pastor contrary to the Inclinations of a People; yet in
 " my Opinion, tho' the People are not obliged, they may
 " submit to the Ministry of such without Sin, declaring
 " their Non-approbation of the Procedure, and testifying
 " against the Manner of Settlement." Yea, Cases may
 " occur wherein I humbly think it will be their Duty to sub-
 " mit; " as in the Case of famous Mr. *Alexander Henderson*,
 " who, at his first Entry to the Ministry at *Leuchars**, was
 " prelatick, and by the Bishop of *St. Andrews* brought in
 " against the Parish's Consent; so that, the Day of his
 " Admission, the Church-Doors being shut by the People,
 " they were forced to break in by a Window to get him
 " Entrance: But a little after, upon the Report of a Com-
 " munion where Mr. *Bruce* was to help, he would needs,
 " from a Longing he had for to hear and see such a Man,
 " go secretly there, and placed himself in a dark Place of
 " the Church where he might not be known. When Mr.
 " *Bruce* was come to the Pulpit, he did for a considerable
 " Time keep Silence, as his Manner was; which did some-
 " way astonish Mr. *Henderson*, but much more when he
 " heard the first Words wherewith he began, which were
 " these, *He that cometh not in by the Door, but climbeth up
 " any other Way, the same is a Thief and a Robber*; which
 " did, by the Lord's Blessing, at the very Present take him
 " by the Heart, and had so great an Impression on him,
 " that it was the Mean of his Conversion." So in case the
 " Person intruded afterwards evidence himself to be the
 " Lord's Servant, an able Minister of the New-Testament,
 " studying to win Souls to Christ, and to advance his Glory
 " by a tender heavenly Walk, carrying as becomes a Mini-
 " ster of Christ, declaring his Disapprobation of violent In-
 " trusions. And here some Difference may be put between an
 " intruder, who has had an active Hand in his being intruded,
 " as by accepting a Presentation, and sticking to it when the
 " People have declared against him; and between a Person
 " intruded by a Judicatory, when he had no other Hand in
 " the Intrusion, but by submitting to the Judicatory's Deter-
 " mination.

I'm far from vindicating the Church of Scotland in any
 violent Settlement which hath been made since 1712: Yet
 it may be said of our Day, what the Reverend Mr. *Alexan-
 der Henderson* says of his Day, in that little *Treatise* in-
 titled,

* *Fulfil. of the Scrip.* p. 449.

titled, *The Government and Order of the Church of Scotland*, which was first published about 1641, when shewing what was the Practice of the Church of Scotland in these and former Times as to the Election of Pastors, namely, "This Liberty of Election is in Part prejudged and hindered by Patronages and Presentations which are still in Use there; not by the Rules of their Discipline, but by the Toleration of that which they cannot amend." And such as may look upon Separation as Duty at this Day, because this or the other Abuse is not rectified by the Church of Scotland, as that solid Divine *Jenkyn*, who was a Sufferer for Christ, dying in Prison for his Cause, says *, "Let them consider whether the Want of the exact purging and reforming of these Abuses proceed not rather from some unhappy Obstructions and political Restrictions in the Exercise of Discipline, than from the Allowance or Neglect of the Church itself." And tho' I am not to vindicate them, yet sundry of our Brethren, who have gone Lengths in appearing for Candidates having Presentations, which others cannot but condemn, have declared, "Was it not for the Strait the Church is in from the Grievance of Patronages, which they profess is a Grievance to them as well as others, they had been as averse from countenancing such Settlements as any." And they affirm the gravaminous Law of Patronages constrained our Church-judicatories even in the best and purest Times of Reformation to the like Measures. But tho' there is Ground to lament over what Compliances our Church-judicatories, inferior and superior, have made with Patronages in former and later Times; yet it must be told to the Praise of the Church of Scotland, as she acted an honest Part in Opposition to the Patronage-Act when it was framing, by sending Commissioners to London to do their utmost against its passing in Parliament; So she has done more of late to have Patronages abolished, than was done from 1638 to 1649, or I think in any other Time since the Reformation: The Commission of the General Assembly 1734 having, by that Assembly's Orders, sent Brethren to London to address King and Parliament for the Repeal of the Patronage-Act, testifying and declaring what a Grievance Patronages are to this Church. And again, the General Assembly 1735, after approving of that Commission in sending such Commissioners, they did of new send up for that Effect. And the Compliances made with Patronages of late Years are not Ground

* On Jude, v. 19. p. m. 261.

Ground of Separation, more than there was Ground to separate from the Church of Scotland in 1642, when the Assembly at St. Andrews enacted, "That the Presbytery should give a Leit with a blank Presentation to the King, or any other Patron, of six Persons willing to accept of the Presentation; that so the Patron might take his Choice of any of those, filling up the Presentation with the Name of any of the six he pleased." And as this ~~Act~~ was made without the least Word of a Testimony against Patronages; so, instead thereof, the Assembly speaks of it as an Act of Grace in the King's Majesty, that he was pleased to accept of this Leit; And again the next Assembly, to wit 1643, petitioned the King's Majesty to accept of a List of three Persons for every Vacancy, because they found Difficulty of getting six able and well-qualified Persons to be put into the List to his Majesty for every vacant Kirk: And neither of these Assemblies gave the least Testimony against Patronages. 'Tis very true, these Lists were to be made up with the Consent of *the most or best Part of the Congregation*, and was not so bad as the thrusting in of Pastors upon Congregations upon little more than a Presentation, and the Concurrence of some non-residing Heritors, or Heritors not of our Communion, with perhaps a few of their compelled Tenants, while the Body of Congregations have been opposite, utterly refusing their Consent: But tho' the List had been made up with the Consent of the whole Congregation, it was a plain Robbing the People of their Right of Election; for in that Case they might never get the Person they most inclined for, and who would have been their Choice had they been left to their Liberty in the Election. And then, by that Act, the Congregation had not so much as the Nomination of one of the six who were to be upon that Leit; for the Presbytery had the naming of them all.

Now the Brethren, in their Act and Testimony, P. 19, say, that, "From 1641, the Building of the House of God went on prosperously and successfully till 1650." But, if the Robbing of the Christian People thus of their Right to elect their Pastors, and the many other bad Acts made in that Period, was a Building of the House of God, I'm far mistaken: And that same Assembly 1642 ordains, That, in the chusing of Elders, not the Congregation, but the Eldership shall have the filling up of Vacancies in the Session. Some complain much of the Church of Scotland, because she hath not declared, that it is contrary to her

Principles to accept of Presentations; and, for my Part, I wish she would, for I think they are antisciptural. But here I may ask such as give this for some Reason of their not joining with Judicatories at this Day, or for Separation from her, if they can instance that Assembly from 1638 to 1649 that ever declared so much: For my Part, I know of none of them; and I am sure it was neither the Assembly 1638 nor the Assembly 1642, for both these Assemblies approved of the accepting Presentations, if the Candidate had the Consent of Presbytery and Congregation.

'Tis a most frivolous Exception to say, Then the Church of *Scotland* had not been reformed from Patronages, as she hath been since; and therefore it was not such a Fault in her to comply with them at that Time as in our Day: For, I affirm, she was as fully reformed in Principle from Patronages and violent Intrusions at her first Reformation, as ever she has been since, or shall be while the World standeth; as is evident from her *first* and *second Books of Discipline*.

If here, or anywhere in this Performance, I have mentioned some of the Actings of the Church of *Scotland* in former Times as unjustifiable, which formerly I vindicated from what was charged upon them by my Antagonist; in Reply I affirm, It is a Mistake to say, I altogether vindicated these, or vindicated them so as to approve of and justify them, tho' I endeavoured to vindicate them in as far as they could be vindicated from what was alledged by him, who, in my Opinion, pleaded from them as Precedents that might be followed; whereas here I mention them as Rocks which ought to be avoided, lest we dash upon them.

But, without insisting further upon this Head, as the Assembly 1736, among her last Acts, unanimously revived the *Act* 1638, whereby Respect is to be had to vacant Congregations, so as *no Person shall be intruded into any Office of the Kirk contrary to the Will of the Congregation to which they are appointed*; so, I hope, the Church of *Scotland* in Time coming will have such a Regard to the Law of Christ, and to this Recommendation, as to guard against all violent Intrusions, whether for the Pleasure of high or low; and who can blame her for living up to our declared Principles, secured to us by the fundamental Laws of the Kingdom? And the Assembly 1735 allowed some of those Parishes, who had Pastors thrust in upon them, a Liberty of Church-Privileges wherever they might have Freedom to ask them; which was a material Testimony against Intrusions.

ably, Some affirm, Ministers scandalous in Life and Conversation may be withdrawn from. The learned Sir Peter King, late Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, having affirmed *, That "An ungrounded and causeless Separation from their lawful Pastor or Parish-church was what the primitive Christians commonly termed *Schism*," and speaking of the Causes which could justify the People's Desertion of their Pastor, says, "These, I think, were two, or at most three: The first was, Apostasy from the Faith; or, when a Bishop renounced the Christian Faith, and, thro' Fear of Prosecution, embraced the heathenish Idolatries: The second was, Heresy; if they could accuse him of false heretical Doctrine:" And then he adds a third, namely, "*A scandalous and wicked Life.*" That African Synod which met Anno 258, whereof Cyprian was Moderator, asserts, It is the Duty of People to separate from the Communion of wicked and ungodly Ministers. Others are of different Sentiments, as Origen, who says, "He that hath a Care of his Soul, will not be scandalized at my Faults who am his Bishop; but, considering my Doctrine, and finding it agreeable to the Church's Faith, from me indeed shall be averse, but he will indeed receive my Doctrine." And some, who think this is Ground of Separation, yet say, 'Tis not to be done by the People at their own Hand, nor till they have the Determination of a Church-judicatory in their favours: Others are of a different Mind, thinking such as are evidently scandalous may be withdrawn from, albeit, thro' the Iniquity of the Times, they should not be censured by a Church-judicatory ||, when complained of. And I am much of this Opinion, yet dare not say with the Author of *Plain Reasons*, that no Man of sound Principles will stand by the other Side of the Question.

Now, whatever Ground there may be (and alas that there is so much!) to lament over the untender Walk of sundry Ministers in this Church, and who among us but have Ground to ly in the Dust for not being more holy and heavenly, more watchful, tender and circumspect, more diligent and faithful? yet, I hope, yea, I'm sure, the Generality of our Ministers are far from being chargeable with what is gross and immoral in their Walk: And, where it may be evident 'tis otherwise, or where any are going on in such a Course, I cannot blame People tho' they separate

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* *Enq. into Conf. dis. &c. P. 163.*

|| *Abjur. no Ground of Separ.*

rate from them, if, being told of their Faults, they openly continue to walk disorderly, hating to be reformed: And, albeit I'm far from pleading innocent, yet all that have travelled own the Ministry of the Church of Scotland are among, if not absolutely, the most tender of any they ever saw.

Some join *Insufficiency* with *Immorality* as a Ground of Separation, tho' I see not what Connection is between them, nor is it easy to determine what *Insufficiency* is; and many Times weaker Gifts are remarkably blest of the Lord, where Men are honest in their Endeavours for him: And yet I doubt not there is Truth in what is said in the *first Book of Discipline*, 4th Head, when some were ready to object, that, in a Scarcity of fit and qualified Persons for the Work of the Gospel, a strict Examination of Candidates was not to be used. To this 'tis answered, " Let them understand, that it is alike to have no Minister at all, and
" to have an Idol in the Place of a true Minister: Yea,
" and in some Cases, it is worse; for those that be utterly
" destitute of Ministers will be diligent to search for them:
" But those that have a vain Shadow do commonly, without further Care, content themselves with the same; and
" so remain they continually deceived, thinking that they
" have a Minister, when in very Deed they have none: For
" we cannot judge him a Dispensator of God's Mysteries,
" that in nowise can break the Bread of Life to the fainting
" and hungry Souls."

6thly, Imposing the least sinful Term of Communion upon us, is just Ground of Separation from a Church. Indeed we are to study the Peace of Jerusalem, preferring it to the Head of our Joy; but we must never join in any Thing which is sinful: No, let us be Men of Strife and Contention to the whole Earth, rather than be guilty of the least Violation of the Royal Law. Some have been of Opinion this is the only Ground which can justify Separation from a Church of Christ *. And all will own 'tis a just Ground, if it be not the apostate Church of Rome, which affirms People are obliged to believe, with the *Coaliers Faith*, or believe as the Church believes, tho' they know not what the Church believes; or those who talk with Bishops Parker and Spotiswood, namely, If the Church impose any Term that's sinful, then she only shall answer for it. But surely

* Burnet, in the Conclusion of his Hist. p. m. 1255. So I think Claude, in his Defence of the Reformation, and others

the Doctrine of *implicite Faith* is damnable Doctrine; all ought to be ready to render a Reason of the Hope which is in them: And the Sin of Superiors in imposing, will never justify Inferiors in complying with the least Iniquity. And should you ask what Terms of Communion may be reckoned sinful, then I answer, 1. If a Church should require it as a Term of Communion of us to condemn any Doctrine of the Gospel, that would be Ground of Separation for them of whom this was required, be that Truth greater or smaller. 2. If required to assert or declare our Belief of any Doctrine or Position which is erroneous. 3. If a Church require us to condemn any Thing in our former Practice which is just and lawful. 4. If they require us to condemn any Thing in the Practice of others which is right and equitable. 5. If they should require us to condemn that as an undoubted sinful Practice or Deed in others, when we are under Doubt as to the Reality of the Fact: As in the Case of worthy Mr. Robert Bruce, who choosed rather Imprisonment and Banishment than to keep a Fast for *Soury's Conspiracy*, as if he had been fully assured of the Thing, when yet with many others he entertain'd Doubts as to the Reality of the Fact. Or, 6. If they should require us to worship God by using such Rites and Ceremonies in his Worship as Christ the King of *Zion* hath not instituted in his Word; as doth not only the Church of *Rome*, but also the Church of *England*, which will not allow People should have Communion with them in God's Ordinances, unless they worship by their stinted *Liturgy*; nor will they allow of Childrens being baptized, unless they have God-fathers and God-mothers, and consent to their being signed with the Sign of the Cross; nor partake with them in the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, unless they kneel in the Act of Receiving, and the like. 7. If they should require us to engage for the future to abstain from what is seasonable Duty, and required of us in our Station. Now, these and such like sinful Terms, or any the least sinful Term of Communion, I mean to those of whom such unlawful Terms are required, are just Ground for Separation. But no such sinful Terms of Communion are required of any Minister, Elder, Deacon or private Member of this Church.

Indeed the Author of *Plain Reasons*, who has left no stone unturned to slander the Church of *Scotland*, he makes the Sinfulness of her Terms one of his fifteen Reasons for declining her Communion: But, tho' he spends al-

almost ten Pages of his Book upon that Topick, yet he could not mention so much as one sinful Term of Communion required of any of the People of this Church. Indeed he instances the *Formula* imposed by the Assembly 1694 and 1700 ; and also the *Formula* of the Assembly 1711, which was to be subscribed by all licensed to preach the Gospel, and all Ministers of this Church : And these *Formula's* he charges as containing sinful Terms of Ministerial Communion, deducing sundry Inferences from them, by which according to him she is highly guilty ; but then they are so inconsequential and groundless, that I will not spend the Reader's Time to name them.



C H A P. V.

In which Arguments are adduced against Separation.

Separation from a true Church, except in the above or like Cases, was always reckoned a hainous Sin by the judicious and tender, albeit her Faults should be many ; tho' I fear few among us have just Impressions of the Evil hereof, the Subject being so seldom touched in Sermons : And 'tis scarcely thought tolerable by sundry at this Day to drop a Word against it. *Eusebius*, in the Life of the Emperor *Constantine*, tells, " That tho' he was a Person full of heroick Valour, yet the Dissentions of the Church were so afflicting to him as to bring many a Tear from his Eyes, and rob him of his Night's Rest." The Reverend Mr. *John King*, in his Speech on the Scaffold, having said, " As I ever abhorred Division and Faction in the Church, as that which tends to its utter Ruin if the Lord prevent it not ; he adds (and here I join with him) I would, in the Bowels of my Lord and Master, if such a seckless one as I may presume to perswade and exhort both Ministers and Professors ; If there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort in Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, that ye be like minded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind. In Lowliness of Mind let each esteem other better than themselves, Philip. ii. 2, 3." The Arguments against Separation are weighty ; as,

1. *Separation is against the Practice of all the Saints under the Old Testament; for, notwithstanding the Corruptions of Priests and People, yet they never separated so as to erect a new Church or a new Altar: Nor did they ever separate from the Worship of the true God, whatever were the Corruptions of the Church. They separated indeed from the Corruptions themselves, and testified against them, but not from the Church in what was agreeable to the Pattern seen in the Mount. From Mens beginning to call upon the Name of the Lord in publick Assemblies, and from the Time that God instituted publick Worship in his Church to the Coming of Christ, we never read of the Saints through all that long Period their separating from that Old-Testament Church for all the Corruptions that were in these Days, tho' the high Places were not taken away. And for as corrupt as Magistrates, Priests and People were in Old-Testament Times, yet, says Calvin *, "The Prophets did neither erect to themselves new Churches, nor build up new Altars, on which they might have separate Sacrifices." And he affirms, "Had the Prophets thought they contracted any Infection, they would rather have died an hundred Times than joined with them." They indeed refused to worship Baalim, or the Calves at Dan and Bebel; they went not in with Idolatry, but they never forsook the Temple-worship.*

Zacharias was a Priest of the Course of Abia, but he was far from separating from Temple-worship in his Day: For as corrupt as the Priesthood was at that Time, he executed the Priest's Office before God in the Order of his Course, burning Incense according to the Custom of the Priests in the Temple of the Lord; and, in so doing, he was approved of God: And, while at Temple-service, he got a singular Revelation, about the Birth of the blessed Harbinger, of the adorable Messias †. And the Spirit of God gives him and his Wife a high Testimony for walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless; had they separated they had not been blameless, this had been their Sin: They walked in all the Ordinances of the Lord, attending on all publick Ordinances. So when our blessed Lord was born, when the Days of Mary his Mother's Purification were accomplished according to the Law, they brought him to Jerusalem, and presented him to the Lord in the Temple, and offered the Sacrifices there which he required ||. And Things were far

* *Instit. Lib. 4. Chap. i. Sect. 18. † Luke i. || Luke ii.*

far more out of Order in the Church of the *Jews* at that Time than can be alledged against us in our Day. So again, 'tis spoken to the Commendation of *Anna*, tho' she was a Prophetess ||, *That she departed not from the Temple*: She separated not from the Temple-worship for all the Corruptions which were in the Office-bearers and Courts of Judicature at that Time, but *served God with Fastings and Prayers Day and Night*; she departed not from the Temple, she was still there, whether it was by Day or Night, when any Temple-service or Worship was to be performed. Here I find 'tis objected, There could be no Separation at that Time, because the Lord had appointed *Jerusalem* should be the Place of Worship, and that the Sons of *Levi* should have the Priesthood. But, if it be a Sin to join in Communion with a Church having Corruptions, or whose Pastors are not what they ought to be, then it would follow, that the Lord's People at that Time were under a Necessity of sinning, either by forsaking God's Ordinances, or by joining with corrupt Men in a Church with many Corruptions, or that the same moral Action which was lawful then would be sinful in us now, or that God had given his People a Dispensation under that OEconomy to do what is sinful in itself, and what may pollute the Soul. If so be the Presence of wicked Men defile the Worship to the Godly, then they had been bound to withdraw from the Church, even under the Old Testament, altho' there had been no other Church to join with: Better be out of the Church visible than be in it, if we must sin by abiding therein. And, if any please, they may see this Argument, which is taken from the Old Testament, handled more largely by Mr. *Fergusson* in his *Separation Refuted*, in Mr. *Shields* his *Treatise of Church-Communion*,— and in Mr. *Hog's Letters*, which *Letters* are truly excellent on this Subject of Separation; so *Rutherford's Due Right*, &c.

2. To separate is contrary to the Practice of Christ and his Apostles when upon Earth: For as corrupt as the Church of the *Jews* was in our Lord's Days, yet he attended upon the publick Worship without separating. The New-Testament Church not being yet constituted, Christ's Enemies watched all Occasions to see what Faults they could lay to his Charge, but they never charged him with separating from or neglecting the publick Temple-worship; and, could they charged him therewith, it had not been neglected, considering what a popular Topick this had been against

against him, the People being all zealous for the Law. And as he attended upon that Worship, so he enjoined others to do so, not only by his Example, but likewise by his Command; as he exhorted the Leper to go and shew himself to the Priest, and to offer the Gift which Moses had commanded, *Mat. viii. 12.* And at another Time he enjoined the Ten Lepers to go and shew themselves to the Priest, *Luke xvii. 14.* And he enjoined the People to hear them that sat in Moses's Seat. Then the Church of the Jews was a very corrupt Church, yet Calvin affirms, for as wicked as the Age was wherein Christ and his Disciples lived, yet "neither the desperate Impiety of the Pharisees, nor the dissolute licentious Way of living which was regnant in those Days, could hinder them from using the same Ordinances with the People, nor could keep them from convening in one Temple with the rest to publick religious Exercises: Whence was this, adds he, but because they knew that joining with the Wicked did not in the least pollute the Lord's sacred Ordinances to them that attended upon them with a pure Conscience *." And Calvin's Arguments against Separation, in his *Institutions*, are so pungent and of such Force, that I know a Person of much Solidity, who had separated from this Church for a good Time after the Revolution, who, upon reading them, saw it his indispensable Duty to join with her. Judicious *Durham* says †, "We see in Christ's Time the Scribes and Pharisees were pointed out by him as scandalous, *Mat. xxiii. 3.* yet even there doth he require Continuance in the Ordinances administred by them notwithstanding." *Rutherford* says, "The Church in Christ's Days was a most perverse Church; the Rulers perverted the Law, denied that Hatred and rash Anger was a Sin, or that Heart-adultery was a Sin; polluted the Worship with Will-worship; the Priesthood was kept by Moses. Caiaphas was high Priest that Year, but Christ by Practice and Precept forbade to separate from this Church ‡." And to the same Purpose speaks Mr. *Shields* in his *Treatise of Church-Communion*, Page 43. However, neither this nor the foregoing Argument says ought in favours of any Church that requires sinful Terms of Communion.

In the Days of the Apostles, when the New-Testament Church was erected and constituted, we read of many Things amiss in the Church of Christ, but never read of any

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* *Instit. L. 4. C. 1. Sect. 19.* † *On Scand. Part 2. Chap. 12. p. m. 127.* ‡ *Pear. Plea, p. 132, 133.*

any Thing like Separation enjoined by the Apostles, or approved by the Practice of any the most holy or tender among the Saints of God all that Time. As there were many Faults, and Faults of a hainous Nature, tolerated, I mean not duly censured, in the Church of *Corinth*, to which the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* writes two large Epistles; in which Church, says *Rutherford* *, "There were Schisms and Contentions, Envy and Strife, Incest, and Incest tolerated, such as is not named amongst the *Gentiles*; going to Law with their Brethren for Gain before Infidels; Harlotry; eating at the Idol's Table; keeping Fellowship with Devils; coming to the Lord's Table drunken, eating and drinking Damnation; a denying of a fundamental Point of Faith, the Resurrection of the Dead, and that with scoffing at it; murdering of weak Souls whom Christ had died for; *Paul's* Name despitefully traduced." And he cites Scriptures for Proof of all these. Yet, says he, "The Apostle was so far from commanding Separation from the Church of *Corinth*, that he commanded and approved their Meeting together, citing 1 Cor. v. 4, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22. & xiv. 16." Mr. *Hog*, in his *Letters against Separation* †, having particularized sundry of the Faults of this Church of *Corinth*, says, "Nevertheless that Church was a true Church." And having affirmed the Faithful in it kept, thro' Grace, at a Distance from the Evils of their Day, and also from such Persons as were grossly corrupt, says, "But not in a separating Way, by erecting themselves into a separated Society, with distinct Church-judicatories; such apocryphal Divinity was unknown to the Prophets and Apostles of Christ, who gave no such Order to these Churches."

If many of the Church of *Galatia*, that had received the Spirit by the Hearing of Faith, and which was a rightly constituted Church, had departed from him who called them to the Grace of Christ unto another Gospel, joining Circumcision and the Works of the Law with Faith, and in a great Measure had fallen from Christ; and if the Church of the *Philippians*, in which there were some who preached Christ out of Envy and Contention, thinking to add Affliction to the Apostle's Bonds; and if the Church of the *Ephesians*, which had fallen from her first Love; and if the Church of *Pergamos*, which held the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans and of Balaam; and if the Church of *Thyatira*, which suffered the wicked Woman Jezebel to seduce Christ's Servants; if the Church

* *Peac. Plea*, p. 141, 142. † p. 17.

Church of *Sardis*, which had a *Name to live*, and yet was dead; if the Church of *Laodicea*, which was turned lukewarm in the Matters of God and Things of Christ; if all these were true Churches, then may a Church with many Faults, or many Corruptions, remain a true Church of Christ, with a lawful visible Ministry; and for all these Faults and Corruptions cannot be separated from, except, as *Rutherford* says, "We leave the Candlestick, and Christ walking in the Midst of the golden Candlesticks *." No doubt the Corruptions which were in these Churches were the Burden of the Lord's own People, and abhor'd by them. As likewise, I doubt not they kept at a due Distance from all such Persons, shunning Familiarity with them that were guilty of these gross Errors and scandalous Practices; notwithstanding there is no Ground to think the Lord required the sincere and more tender Part to separate themselves from the more slack and lukewarm as a distinct Society. And, as *Mr. Hog* says, "The Lord walked among the golden Candlesticks in these Churches, and guided his People to bearing a Testimony for him, without such Church-ruining Extremes †."

4. This is a Sin and Evil against which the primitive Christians were very zealous: As they laid great Weight upon Peace and Unity among the Lord's Servants and People in these Times, so they looked upon Division and Separation in the Church of Christ as the greatest Evil which can befall the Church. *Colforgie*, the above-mentioned Author of *the Church of Scotland's Grievances considered*, when speaking against the *Toleration*, says, "It indulges a causeless Separation from the established Church, which we find the primitive Christians were very zealous against." *Dionysius Alexandrinus*, when writing to *Novatian*, who made a lamentable Rent in the primitive Church, setting up for greater Strictness, being against allowing Church-communion or Church-privileges to any that had fallen after Baptism, or that had fallen in Times of Persecution, whatever their Repentance should be, affirms, "It was better for *Novatian* to suffer any Thing than that the Church of Christ should be rent asunder; asserting, It is no less glorious to suffer Martyrdom to keep Division out of the Church, yea, and probably more glorious, than to die a Martyr for not sacrificing to Idols; for in the first Martyrdom is suffered for one Soul, but in the other for the universal Church." *Augustine*, who by

some hath been esteemed the eminentest of the Fathers, in writing to the *Donatists*, who were much of the same Opinion with the *Novatians*, and did also separate, making a deplorable Schism in the primitive Times (because any were received into the Church who had been *Traditores*, delivering up their Bibles to be burnt to save their Lives, under the Persecution of *Maximinus*, rejecting the Communion of all the Churches of Christ, confining the whole Church unto their own Party, denying Salvation to others, rebaptizing all that came unto them from other Churches) he tells those *Donatists* †, *That Schism was a greater Sin than that of the Traditores*. And some of them, I humbly think, went too far in their inveighing against Separation, as the famous *Martyr Cyprian*, who lived in the third Century, and said, "Whosoever was a Schismatick, had no longer God for his Father, nor the Church for his Mother, but was out of the Number of the Faithful; and tho' he should die for the Faith, yet could he never be saved."

5. This seems to be a manifold Breach of our *National Engagements*, in which we are solemnly sworn against the hainous Sin of *Schism*; which, as *Durham* describes it, is, "A separating from the Communion of a true Church, whether more or less pure *." And the Reverend Mr. *Webster*, in his Letter to Mr. *Mc Millan*, approves of this Description ‡, where he says, "As to the fearful Epithets of *Schismaticks* and *Separatists*, wherewith you and your Party are branded, and which are so odious to you, let all good Men judge whether you may be justly called so. The Definition of Schism is, A separating from the Unity and Communion of a true Church. If you doubt this Definition, know that it is the Definition the learned Mr. *Durham* gave of it, on *Rev. xviii. 4.*" And the Author of *Hind let loose* seems to approve of this, when he says, "It is indeed Ministers Duty to show People how great a Sin Schism is, and that the Wrath of God is not far off from them who make and cherish sinful Separation:" For there he makes *Schism* and *sinful Separation* the same. And, if I be not far mistaken, the Brethrens Definition of *Schism* in their first *Testimony*, P. 97. is altogether new, when they say, "*Schism* is a causeless Separation from a Church, well constitute, sound in Doctrine, pure in Worship, impartial in Discipline, and acting in the Government according to the Laws of Christ."

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† Cont. *Donat. Lib. 2. Cap. 6.*

* On *Rev. Chap. xviii. Ver. 4. P. m. 680.* ‡ P. 12

Which looks like a perfect Church. See *Darham on Scandal*, Part 4th, Chap. 1st, for a fuller Account of the Nature of *Schism*. And, while the Church of *Scotland* remains a true Church of Christ, having pure Standards, requiring no sinful Terms of Communion of us, unless we break Covenant-engagements, we are obliged to remain in that Church, guarding against the suffering of ourselves to be drawn away to Division or Separation from her, tho' we are never to approve of, or join in any Thing which is sinful: Those we are always to testify against, but still in a Way of Church-communion. Mr. Hog says II, "For the erecting of a Church within a Presbyterian Church, I must say that it is a Novation with a Witness. Our Friends express much Zeal for the Obligation of our Covenants (which I acknowledge is inviolable) and therefore I would recommend to their serious Views that Article of our National Covenant, whereby we abjure all Novations contrary to our received Standards. Sure I am, our old Covenanters were not of their Mind. I know no Precedent for their Way amongst us save this one, of which I think they will not be very fond, namely, that of the *Publick Resolutioners*, who were the first that ever pretended to set up distinct Judicatories in this Church; The Protesters sat with them in Judicatories without any Hesitation, and pressed to continue, and to act a faithful Part as it might please the Lord to guide them; but the *Resolutioners* would not act jointly with them, they were the Separatists." Mr. Hog thought the erecting of a Church within a Presbyterian Church, was a Novation with a Witness. And Neal, in his *History of the Puritans*, Part 3. P. 307. speaking of the Debates which were at the *Westminster* Assembly between the Assembly's Committee and the *Independents*, says, "As to the Charge of *Schism*, they, viz. the Assembly's Committee, admit, that Difference in Judgment in some particular Points is not *Schism*, nor does an Inconformity to some Things in-joined deserve that Name; but our Brethren (says that Committee) desire further to set up separate Communions, which is a manifest Rupture of our Societies into others, and is therefore a *Schism* in the Body: This is setting up Altar against Altar, allowing our Churches to be true Churches, as the *Independents* do." And Mr. Webster, in End of that Letter of his to Mr. M^r Millan, having said, "As we nor no Man of common Sense can justify your

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“ unrival’d and hateful Schism,” a little after says, “ A detestable Neutrality and Indifferency, now-a-days ignorantly called *Moderation*, grafted on carnal Prudence, and supported by sinful Politicks, on the one Hand, and a scandalous Schism on the other, are equally abjured by our Covenants, and are two Extremes we should equally guard and pray against.” And as, by our Ordination-engagements, Ministers are bound and obliged to maintain the Unity and Peace of this Church against Schism, and that they shall follow no divisive Course from her present established Doctrine, Worship, Discipline or Government; so, for any of her Ministers in our Day to separate from the Church of *Scotland*, seems a plain Breach of Ordination-vows.

6. This is a going contrary to the Acts of the Church of *Scotland* in what hath been reckoned her best and purest Times, and is so by Separatists themselves, as to go no further back than between 1638 and 1649. As then she solemnly swore, so then she made sundry Acts against Separation, and in favours of Union: And, in some of her Acts at that Time for preserving of Peace and Union, she went very far; as the General Assembly, by her Act of the Date *August* 9th 1643, enjoins all Ministers, and especially all Ministers upon the Coasts where there are any Harbours and Ports, to try and search for all Books tending to Separation: And, in that Act, they recommend it to the Civil Magistrate to concur with his Authority in all Things for the effectual Execution of this Act. So again, that same Assembly 1643, in another Act, which was of the Date *August* 15th 1643, Session 12th, says, “ The Assembly testify their unanimous Consent against all Schism and Division, unto which these Times, thro’ the Working of *Satan* and his Instruments against the Propagation of the Gospel of Peace, are so inclined.— And doth exhort and command, that all endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; that all Beginnings of Separation, all Scandal and Division, be by all Means avoided; and that against Envy, and Strife, and Faction, and Glorying in Men, every one go before another in the Duties of Love, &c.” So in that already cited Act 1647, whereby, for preserving Order, Unity and Peace in the Kirk, and for preventing of Schism, they enjoined every Member in every Congregation to keep their own Parish-kirk, communicating there in Word and Sacrament. And again, the Assembly 1647, Sess. 26th, make an

an Act to the same Purpose, in which that Assembly inhibited and discharged all the Members of this Church and Kingdom, in the Name of God, to converse with any tainted with Errors for Separation; and that they beware of, and abstain from all Books maintaining it. Again, that same Year, in her Act of the Date *August 24th 1647*, the Title of it is, *The Directions of the General Assembly for secret and private Worship, and mutual Edification, for cherishing Piety, for maintaining Unity, and avoiding Schism and Division*; there, out of Zeal for Union, that Assembly, in my Opinion, declares against Fellowship-meetings for Prayer and Christian Conference: Their Words, when speaking of the Lord's People meeting together for religious Worship, are, "Whatever have been the Effects and Fruit of Meetings of Persons of divers Families in Times of Corruption or Trouble (in which Cases many Things are commendable which otherwise are not tolerable) yet, when God hath blessed us with Peace and Purity of the Gospel, such Meetings of Persons of divers Families (except in Cases mentioned in these Directions) * are to be disapproved, as tending to the Hindrance of the religious Exercise of each Family by itself, to the Prejudice of the publick Ministry, to the renting of the Families of particular Congregations, and (in Process of Time) of the whole Kirk, besides many Offences which might come thereby, to the hardning of the Hearts of carnal Men, and Grief of the Godly."

I shall be far from condemning such Meetings; yet, where the Effect of them is the Prejudice of the publick Ministry, and renting of particular Families or Congregations, and where they tend to the renting of the Kirk of Christ, in so far they cannot be justified. And hence the above Act or Conclusion, if *Guthrie* in his *Memoirs* is to be credited, P. 65. was unanimously gone into by Messieurs *Alexander Henderson, Andrew Ramsay, David Dickson, Robert Blair, David Calderwood, Samuel Rutherford, John Livingstone*, and many others, who met to confer about that Affair at Mr. *Alexander Henderson's* Chamber in 1639: Surely this was from Convictions of the Evil of Separation. And if, as I hear sundry regret, the Effect of such Meetings in many Places at this Day is, the Alienation of Peoples Affections from the Ministry, and the Encouragement of

Sepa-

* The Cases mentioned in those Directions were, *Those who were lodged with them, or at Meal, or otherwise with them upon some lawful Occasion.*

Separation from the Church of *Scotland*; tho' the Abuse of a Duty will not make it unlawful; yet I'm sure, in that Case, such Meetings are not for the better, but for the worse. Fellowship-meetings, if rightly managed, are profitable; yet there may be Truth in what *Durham* says †, "The Pretext of Christian Fellowship is abused, to the hatching and propagating of the most absurd Opinions, when People turn light and frothy, taking up their Time with vain Janglings, and diverting from the main Scope, to wit, Edification: These Things are indeed to be shunned; but Christian Fellowship is not to be disclaimed, but wisely to be ordered in respect of the Persons with whom, and Occasions upon which it is used." And the General Assembly 1647 was so impress'd with the Evil and Danger of Schism and Separation, that they unanimously declared, "The Civil Magistrate may and ought to suppress by corporal or civil Punishment such as, by spreading Error or Heresy, or by fomenting Schism, greatly dishonour God, dangerously hurt Religion, and disturb the Peace of the Kirk;" Declaring, They firmly believed, owned, maintained and commended to others this Head of Doctrine, as solid, true, orthodox, grounded upon the Word of God, consonant to the Judgment both of the ancient and the best reformed Kirks ||.

7. To separate from a true Church tho' her Faults be many, as this is contrary to the Sentiments of the Church of *Scotland* in what hath been esteemed her purest Times, so this is contrary to the Mind of other reformed Churches; As to the once famous Protestant Church of *France*, which says, "A Pastor or Elder breaking the Church's Union, or stirring up Contention about any Point of Doctrine, or of the Discipline which he had subscribed, — and not conforming to the Determination of the Colloquy (or Presbytery) he shall be then suspended from his Office, and be further prosecuted by the Provincial or National Synod ||." And such was the Care of that Church to prevent Schism or Separation, that tho' they were not to have a National Synod but once in three Years, yet, in case of Schism, a National Synod was to be called *pro re nata* *. And in the National Synod of *Privas* in 1612, at which Time there were Dissenters in that Church, in an Act for Remission, they express the greatest Concern for Harmony,

† On *Scand.* Part 3. Chap. 15. || Act concerning the 3d Prop. || *Discipline*, Chap. 5. Art. 32. * *Quick's Synod.* p. 191. 1st Vol.

mony, Peace and Union, while they say, ——— “ Moreo^r
 “ ver this Assembly intreateth and exhorteth all for God’s
 “ Sake, and the Glory of his great Name, and their own
 “ Salvation, and for the Peace and Welfare of the Nation;
 “ yea, it adjures by all that is desirable or commendable,
 “ the whole Body of our Communion in general, and every
 “ faithful Soul in particular, to divest themselves of all A-
 “ nimosities whatsoever, and to lop off immediately all
 “ Dissolutions and Dissentions, lest they should be the
 “ Causes of the Dissipation of the Churches of God in
 “ this Kingdom. And ——— all Pastors and Elders of
 “ Churches are enjoined diligently to procure the Reunion
 “ of the respective Members of their Flocks, and to lend
 “ one another their helping Hand to effect so good a Work,
 “ and mightily to insist upon it in their publick Sermons,
 “ and private Exhortations and Remonstrances; And in
 “ case they should meet with Contempt, Scorn and Re-
 “ proach in the Discharge of this their Duty, and that any
 “ one, through an obdurate Perverseness, should shew
 “ himself implacable and irreconcilable; this Assembly,
 “ according to that Authority which the great God gives
 “ unto the Ministers of his holy Word, denounceth to
 “ them the dreadful Judgments of God, and wisheth they
 “ may be had in Execration † among and by all the Faith-
 “ ful; yea, all the Censures of the Church shall be exer-
 “ ted against such refractory Persons, and the utmost Ri-
 “ gour of our Discipline shall be inflicted and executed u-
 “ pon them, lest the good Name of God should be bla-
 “ sphemed through our Sins, and that we may not contract
 “ upon ourselves the Guilt of the Church’s Desolation.”

Again, the *Helvetic* Churches in their *Confession of Faith* ‡, which was approven and subscribed by all the Pro-
 testant Ministers in *Helvetia*, as *Zurich*, *Bern*, *Glaris*, *Raril*,
Schaffhausen, *Apenzel*, *St. Gal*, *Malhausen*, *Geneva*, &c.
 and received and approven by the Church of *Savoy*, *Po-*
land and *Hungary*, and also by the Church of *Scotland*, ha-
 ving asserted that the Marks of a true Church are the *true*
and sincere Preaching of the Word, and *right Administration*
of the Sacraments, say, “ We esteem so highly of Commu-
 “ nion with the true Church of Christ, that we deny they
 “ can live before God who do not communicate with this
 “ true Church of God, but separate themselves from it:
 “ As without the Ark of *Noah* there was no Salvation, but
 “ the World perished in the Deluge, so we believe that

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“ with-

† That is, Detestation. ‡ Chap. xvii. Sect. 13, 14,

“ without *Christ*, who offers himself to be received in the
 “ Church, there is no certain Salvation; and therefore we
 “ teach, that they who would live they ought not to separate
 “ from a true Church of *Christ*.” And, by their Words
 in that Place, ’tis clearly intimated a Church may be guilty
 of many great Evils, and yet be a true Church of *Christ*:
 For they say, “ We know moreover what sort of Churches
 “ the Church of *Galatia* and the Church of *Corinth* were
 “ in the Days of the Apostles, in which the Apostle accu-
 “ seth them of many and grievous Wickednesses, *Multa &*
 “ *gravia scelera*; and yet he calls them holy Churches of
 “ *Christ*.”

And so the Churches of *Christ* in *New-England*, in their
Platform of Church-Discipline, say, “ The suffering of pro-
 “ fane and scandalous Livers to continue in Fellowship and
 “ partake of the Sacraments, is doubtless a great Sin in
 “ those that have Power in their Hands to redress it and do
 “ it not nevertheless; insomuch as *Christ* and his Apostles in
 “ their Times, and the Prophets and other godly Men in
 “ theirs, did lawfully partake of the Lord’s commanded
 “ Ordinances in the *Jewish* Church, and neither taught nor
 “ practised Separation from the same, tho’ unworthy ones
 “ were permitted therein; and, inasmuch as the Faithful
 “ in the Church of *Corinth*, wherein are many unworthy
 “ Persons and Practices, are never commanded to absent
 “ themselves from the Sacraments because of the same, there-
 “ fore the Godly in like Cases are not to separate. As Sepa-
 “ ration from such a Church wherein profane and scandalous
 “ Persons are tolerated is not presently necessary, so for the
 “ Members thereof, otherwise worthy, hereupon to abstain
 “ from communicating with such a Church in the Participati-
 “ on of the Sacraments, is unlawful: For, as it were unreason-
 “ able for an innocent Person to be punished for the Faults of
 “ others, wherein he hath no Hand, and whereunto he
 “ gave no Consent; so is it more unreasonable that a godly
 “ Man should neglect Duty, and punish himself, in not com-
 “ ing for his Portion in the Blessing of the Seals as he
 “ ought, because others are suffered to come that ought
 “ not; Especially considering that himself doth neither con-
 “ sent to their Sin, nor to their approaching to the Ordina-
 “ nances in their Sin, nor to the Neglect of others who
 “ should put them away and do not, but on the contrary
 “ doth heartily mourn for these Things, modestly and sea-
 “ sonably stir up others to do their Duty.”

2. Such

9. Such as have separated, or are tempted to separate from this Church, would seriously weigh the Sentiments of eminently holy, zealous, learned and judicious Divines in particular, and what a terrible Aspect Separation hath still had in their Eyes. And here I'll instance some of them, confining myself to the Sentiments of eminent Divines in our own Church; as Mr. *Livingstone*, in his *Letter from Holland to his Parishoners of Ancrum 1671*, tells, tho' he had no Challenges for joining with the *Protesters* in the Beginning, but rather Approbation, yet says, "I withdrew from the Meetings of the *Protesters* when I perceived the Matter like to tend to a stated Schism." And tho' he condemns the *publick Resolutioners*, and the Courses taken in 1651, yet says, *He could have wished that more Moderation and more real Endeavours for Union had been used by both Parties.* And in his *Life*, speaking of the *publick Resolutioners*, says, "My Light carried me to join with them that protested against these Resolutions, and the Assemblies that followed thereafter; and I was present at the first Meeting of some of the *Protesters* in the West at *Kilmarnock*, and thereafter at several of their Meetings: But indeed I was not satisfied in my Mind that the *Protesters* kept so many Meetings, so numerous, and of so long Continuance, which I thought made the Division wider, and the more conspicuous than otherwise it would have been; and therefore I staid from many Meetings." Which shows this Servant of Christ was much impress'd with the Evil of Division and Separation.

Again, Mr. *George Gillespie* *, after exhorting to take heed of proud, lofty and self-conceited new Lights, and citing 1 Cor. xiv. 32, 33. *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets. For God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace*, says, "Beware of separating new Lights; to separate from, or gather Churches out of the true reformed or reforming Churches, hath not the least Warrant from the Word of God: When we see this or that amiss in a Church, we are bidden exhort one another, and provoke one another to Good, but not to separate, *Heb. x. 24, 25.* *Zuinglius* conferred amicably with the *Anabaptists* in *Zurich* as with dissenting Brethren; and no Course was taken to suppress or restrain them by the secular Power, till they grew to gather Churches out of the true reformed Churches: But, when it came to that, they could not be suffered or forborn, it was thought neces-

"sary to restrain them." To gather Churches out of Churches hath always been condemned by *Presbyterians* as the Error of our Brethren the *Independents*.

Durham says ‡, "Herefies do often more Hurt to the Church by their Contentions and Schisms than by their Doctrines:" And he speaks to the same Purpose in many other Places of his Commentary on the *Revelation*; as on the Epistle to the Church of *Thyatira*, where, in his 9th Observation upon it, says, "Our Lord Jesus is no Approver nor Countenancer of Separation from a true Church for the Faults of some Members in it; neither do Faults in some Members, and Defects in Ministers and Officers in executing Discipline, pollute the Ordinances in themselves, or to others who are free of that Guilt; and so do not necessitate a Separation from such a Church, or any Ordinance thereof: For, this and the former Epistle being compared together, these Things are clear, That there were gross Members in the Church, Adulterers, Nicolaitans, Seducers, &c. that they are continued in Church-Communion, thou hast them and sufferest them, clearly import this; for that Angel no otherwise had them but as Church-Members under his Charge. 3. That this Angel sinfully permitted them to continue Church-Members, and therefore is reprov'd. And downwards he adds the Words formerly cited, Hence also we may see that Christ doth not rigidly cast off Churches for Defects in Discipline and Grossness of particular Members, when in the main the Foundation is kept." So in many other Places of his Commentary on the *Revelation*, and also of his *Treatise* upon *Scandal* †, where he says, "Schism hath ever proven exceeding hurtful to the Church, and hath been an Inlet and Nursery to the greatest Errors: It is most pressingly condemned in the Scriptures, even with as great Weight as corrupt Doctrine and Heresy are; and it is attributed to that same Original, to wit, the Flesh, with Witchcraft, Idolatry, Heresy, &c. *Gal. v. 20.* — It hath also proven most dangerous to those who have been engaged therein, and often hath been a Snare to bring on spiritual Desertion, Deadness of Spirit, Security, Self-confidence, or some other spiritual Evils of that kind." Now, the Words of the judicious *Durham* are so plain and pointed against Separation from any such Church as the Church of *Scotland* is, and hath been since the *Revolution*, that they are very blind who cannot see what moved that

Author

Author of *Plain Reasons* to slander the posthumous Writings of the Reverend, Learned and Judicious *Durham*, as being vitiated, inconsistent, and opposite to one another, as that Author does in the 46th p. of his Book; to which Calumny an Answer may be given afterwards in an Appendix."

Mr. *Hog* says †, "Testimonies for the Lord are necessary, lovely and singularly useful, when according to Rule: But, when these prescribed Bounds are exceeded, and our misguided Zeal for a pretended Respect to the Lord's Honour, hurrieth to a taxing the Commissions of his choicest Ambassadors, and trampling such as are eminently beautified with Christ's Image, who can tell how far this Gangrene may reach?——My Heart trembles at the Mischiefs which any one unsound and unsafe Position doth lead to, especially in Matters of this Nature; and have often admired the judicious Observe of a great Man, against whom our Friends, especially the more exercised, are not much, if at all, prejudiced, viz. *He that sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed; but who so sheddeth the Blood of Churches, his Blood shall be shed by the Lord* ‡." And he calls Separation from Ministers of the Gospel, *A tearing of their Commissions*, so far as it lies in the Power of such as separate.

Mr. *M'Ward*, in a *Letter* printed at the End of his *Earnest Contendings* II, where writing I suppose to some of the *Society-people*, says, "Consider that a Separation, when not upon clear and just Grounds, is a greater Sin before God, and more piercing to the Heart of Christ, than either Murder or Adultery, &c. because this is to dissolve the Union of his Church, and to divide Christian Societies. Whosoever shall be found to plead for this, I dare affirm he blows that Fire with his Breath, which Christ would quench with his Blood. My dear Friends, weigh seriously, as before the Lord, how *Jesus Christ* will take it at any Man or Woman's Hand, to tear the Commission of any of his Ambassadors, whom he will still own as an Ambassador, and as negotiating a Peace between God and Sinners: Sure I need neither tell you that withdrawing from hearing such is a tearing their Commission; nor need I tell you that this will be found a Sin more hateful and hainous in the Sight of *Jesus Christ*, than many others that appear more black."

Mr. *Shields* says*, "Division and Schism is not only a great Misery,

† *Casuiſt. Eſſ.* p. 84. ‡ These are ſaid to be the Words of Mr. *Shepherd*, II P. 371. * *Hind let looſe*, p. 42.

"Mifery, but a grand Sin." And afterwards adds,—
 "Tho' there be not perfect Union, but Diversity both of
 "Judgments and Practices in feveral Cafes, there may be
 "Communion with a Church in its Ordinances and Mini-
 "ftry." And hence, after giving his *Testimony* againft
 what he thought was amifs at the *Revolution*, he had full
 Freedom to join with the Church of Scotland; and in fo
 doing he did not fee the leaft Sin: For he was convinced
 there may be Union and Love where Sentiments about
 Things which are not fundamental are very different, as
 it was for a long Season in the late fuffering Times among
 the *Proteftors* and *Refolutioners*. Whatever different Sentiments
 were among them as to the publick *Refolutions*, and
 about paying the *Cafe*, and the like, yet fays he, viz. Mr.
Shields †, "All this Time (to wit, from the Beginning of
 "their Sufferings till long after the Indulgence) Minifters and
 "Profefors were unite, and with one Soul and Shoulder
 "followed the Work of Lord."

Again, Mr. *Webfter*, in Preface to his Letter to Mr.
Millan, after lamenting over the Sins of the Church of
 Scotland, and the Calamities brought upon her at that Time,
 "fays, "And, to complete the difmal Scene of our Mifery,
 "we have had for a long Time among us one of the moft
 "scandalous, pernicious and moft unaccountable Schifms
 "that perhaps ever was in any Age of the Church; a
 "Schifm carried on by three weak Men, fupported by a
 "poor People, and both are equally ignorant of the Na-
 "ture of Union with, and Separation from, a Church,
 "and of what will juftify the one or other; they cannot,
 "in a Confiftency with their Principles, hold Communion
 "with any Church this Day on Earth. We confefs to our
 "Shame there are many Things wrong among us, and
 "that there are Errors in the Adminiftration, againft which
 "we are, with the Help of Grace, ftill ftuggling and con-
 "tending; and we refolve ever to plead againft fuch Cor-
 "ruptions: But no Man of common Underftanding will
 "think this National Church fhould be caft off, and that
 "we fhould feparate from her; we have a good Conftitu-
 "tion; we have a Standard of Doctrines without Error;
 "Westminster Confefion of Faith, which we own as the
 "Confefion of our Faith; we have fubfcribed and preach
 "the Doctrines therein contained; our Worftup is pure,
 "without Mens Additions; our Difcipline and Govern-
 "ment, in their Conftitution, are agreeable unto, founded

† *Hind let loofe*, p. 121.

on, and appointed in the Word of God; and there are
 no sinful Terms of Communion imposed. As we cannot, and hope never shall, justify the Measures some take, and for which they shall answer to God; so we will not despise the Dust of Zion: What of the covenanted Work of Reformation is remaining among us, we must favour that Dust, and look on it as precious, and pray and wrestle, by the Help of Grace, that our Lord would return to build his own House (for Men have not Courage to do it) and take a new Insestment thereof by a Cloud of his Glory. There are a Sett of faithful Ministers in this Church, who are troubled for the many Offences that are given, and for laying so many stumbling Blocks before the Blind: And as they mourn for these in Secret, so they give frequent Testimony against them."

Mr. Thomas Hog Minister at *Kiltearn in Ross*, who had much of the Spirit of Prophecy, and to whom the Brethren in their *State of the Process*, Page 9th, give the Testimony of being an extraordinary Man, in his Life written by Mr. James Hog Minister at *Carnock*, tho' he owns he was against the Indulgences, and dissatisfied with the Management of sundry under the *Toleration* granted by James VII. disapproving of the flattering *Addresses* which were sent to that Prince by some Presbyterian Ministers in *Scotland* and *England*, having mentioned the Respect and Kindness he had for some desirable Persons who went Lengths in these Matters which he could not allow, says*,
 "But for the Separation, or, as they would term it, the
 "Withdrawing from Presbyterian Ministers, which was
 "set on Foot in the Times of Persecution, and continueth
 "to this Day, he was utterly against it." And a little after says †, Touching the Principles and Practices of sundry, who, during the Persecution and afterwards, did abstract from hearing Presbyterian Ministers, and confined their Attendance to some few, tho' he pitied a poor oppressed and harrassed Company, considering that Oppression will make even a wise Man mad; yet he utterly disapproved and detested their singular Opinions, and was at Pains to reclaim such of them as he had Occasion to see. He was then a Prisoner, but found Favour to get out upon Bail at certain Times, and had the fairer Occasion to commune with several Persons of that Sett, who, by his Converse, were brought to a better Mind, tho' some relapsed and smarted for it as he had foretold them.
 "The

* P. M. 15. † P. 16.

" The Bulk of that separating People was filled with In-
 " dignation, and the keenest Hatred against him, which
 " they expressed by Names and in Ways I love not to re-
 " peat: Many of these went to extravagant Heights.—
 " As to the separating Principles about Hearing, &c. their
 " native Tendency to subvert all Church-communion, even
 " in the purest Times, was and is manifest to any who
 " with Judgment and without Bias consider the Matter.
 " He took special Notice on these Occasions of that me-
 " morable and awful Fence which the Lord Jesus was
 " pleased to set about his Servants whom he hath sent forth
 " to speak in his Name, viz. *He that beareth you, saith*
 " *he, beareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me;*
 " *and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me,* Luke
 " x. 11, 12,--16. *Mark x. 11, 12, 13, &c.* The Guilt
 " inwrapp'd here reacheth far. He judiciously remarked,
 " that 'tis no small Matter at once to despise and reject God,
 " Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and yet a rejecting these
 " whom the Lord hath sent imports so much, being upon
 " the Matter a tearing the Commissions of Christ's Am-
 " bassadors. I think it most observable, for Confirmation
 " of this Remark, that the Body of these Separatists had,
 " and expressed the greatest Aversion from the most eminent
 " and faithful Ministers of Christ, who were not of their
 " Mind, whereas they could have been more easily per-
 " swaded to comport with others. All centers here, name-
 " ly, a Sameness of Sentiment with them as to the Ex-
 " tremes to which they declined, was made the necessary
 " Condition of Church-communion." And Oh that it was
 " not so in our Day !

Mr. *Gabriel Sempil*, in the History of his own Life,
 speaking of the Differences between the *Protesters* and *Pub-
 lick Resolutioners*, says, P. 12. " These Differences were a
 " sad Trial and Temptation to the Church, and occasion'd
 " many sad Animosities and Alienations in Affection both
 " amongst Ministers and People, and obstructed greatly
 " the Power of Godliness and Edification amongst all, and
 " did beget much Prejudice, Envy and Emulation, that
 " many look'd more at their own Image in others than the
 " Image of God in them, and accordingly rejected them;
 " which always falls in in Differences amongst the Godly.
 " —But, after King *Charles* in the 1660 returned from
 " his Exile, then their Eyes were opened to see the Evil
 " of Division, &c." And, speaking of the *Indulgence*,
 " lays, " Some more zealous than knowing and considerate
 " did

“ did aggravate the Acceptance of the Indulgence to a
 “ great Height, and Ground of Separation, and so wrought
 “ their Enemies Work for them better than they could do
 “ it for themselves: And so that Division proved fatal at
 “ *Botbwell*, where they had a fair Game, and Opportu-
 “ nity to have defeated all their Enemies, and brought Pre-
 “ lacy down to the Dust. It is observable, there was this
 “ Difference in the two Appearances; *Pentland* had Love,
 “ Harmony and Sympathy, wanting nothing but Men and
 “ Arms; *Botbwell* had both, and wanted Harmony, but
 “ plagued with Division.”

And Mr. *Boston*, late Minister of the Gospel at *Ettrick*,
 in Sermons upon 1 Cor. x. 17. * speaking of Separation from
 the Men of this World, and showing in what we are not
 called to separate from them, says, “ Nor are we to sepa-
 “ rate from them, so as to refuse to serve God and worship
 “ him with them according to his own Institutions: This
 “ our Saviour himself did, *Luke* iv. 16. Thus did the A-
 “ postles also with the *Jews*.” And having affirmed,
 That, when the Worship is pure, but some sinful Thing is
 imposed as a Term of Communion with the Worshippers,
 we must refuse Communion with them; “ In this Case,
 “ says he †, Separation is not only lawful, but a necessary
 “ Duty.” And then he adds, *Could I perceive either of*
those this Day in our Case in the Communion of this Church,
I should not only think it my Duty to separate, but also to press
you to it; but, tho’ our Mother has gone far back, she is not
gone that Length. And, after instancing sundry Duties we
 owe to the Body of Christ, he says ‖, “ Be tender of the
 “ Unity of the Body, *Eph* iv. 3, 4. 1 Cor. xii. 25. Schisms,
 “ Rents and Divisions, are like Wounds, Cuts and breaking
 “ of Bones in the natural Body, which exceedingly weakens
 “ it, and marrs its Beauty; they are the Sin and Judgment
 “ of a Church, bringing Dishonour to the Lord Jesus,
 “ marring the Success of the Gospel, and ruining the
 “ Church at length; they bring much Grief to tender
 “ Souls, and expose Religion to the Mocking of Enemies.
 “ The Renting of the Body of Christ has so much of Hor-
 “ rour about it, as may make it frightful to serious Mem-
 “ bers: We must separate from none further than they
 “ separate from Christ: We must not go in to Sin with
 “ the Members of the mystical Body more than with the
 “ World, under the Pain of the Displeasure of the Head;
 “ but we may lawfully serve the Lord in his own Ordi-

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“ nances

* P. 169. † P. 171. ‖ P. 187.

“ nances with sinful Members: Even as, when one Foot is
 “ in the Mire, the other must not go into the Mire with it;
 “ yet there is no Necessity of renting the one Leg from
 “ the other, but the one must still walk with the other on
 “ clean Ground.”

Now, from what hath been said upon this Argument,
 ’tis pretty evident our *Separatists* are *Antipodes* in their Sen-
 timents and Practice to the *Cloud of Witnesses*, particularly
 to our most eminent Worthies in former and later Times.
 Hence Mr. Hog says *, “ I reckon it uncontested among
 “ Christians, that there never was, is, nor shall be, any State
 “ of the Churches of Christ wherein the Scriptures of
 “ Truth give not sufficient and full Direction.— And
 “ then he adds, The Scripture gives us no Precedent for
 “ testifying against a Church, whose received and enacted
 “ Standards as to Doctrine and Discipline are pure, by se-
 “ parating from it, and setting up another Church within
 “ its Bosom and in Opposition to it: Nor were these the
 “ Footsteps of the Flock in other Churches, or in our own,
 “ until these last and perillous Days.” And again, he
 says †, “ Thus, dear Sir, I have traced your separating
 “ Project thro’ divers Periods of the Church under the
 “ Old and New Testament: And, having given you
 “ Touches at the good and old Way of our Lord himself,
 “ the Prophets and Apostles, I have pondered these Mat-
 “ ters again and again, and have had the Occasion to know
 “ the Thoughts of the brightest Lights of this and other
 “ reformed Churches, who all are of the same Sentiments
 “ on this weighty Head, and do jointly express their high
 “ Detestation of Schisms, which yet never came up the
 “ Length of your new Project. Pardon me to say it, I
 “ love to live and die with the *Cloud of Witnesses*, and
 “ especially with such great and eminent Worthies; and
 “ have often been put to say it solemnly before the Lord,
 “ Let not my Soul enter into the Secret of your Schisma-
 “ tical Courses.”

But here perhaps it will be objected, The Church of
Scotland is much worse than at the Times in which Mr. Hog
 or these Worthies aforementioned inveighed so much against
 Separation, considering what violent Intrusions have been
 made of late upon Congregations, and Error manifested in
 the Lenity shown to grossly erroneous Men, who have been
 suffered to pass without due Censure; and therefore their
 Authority is of less Weight in the present Case, whatever
 they

they have said against Separation. *Ans.* 1. I shall not say but the Church of *Scotland* may be worse at this Day than sometimes formerly, nor shall I say but she hath been upon the Decline for some Time; yet, 2. I hope, she has not declined nor gone back so as any of these Things, mentioned as Grounds of Separation, are to be found in her. And, 3. These Divines which have been cited, as they spoke or wrote against Separation from any Church, unless upon sufficient Grounds; so all of them, as *Messieurs Sempil, Webster, Hog, Boston* and others, 'tis well known, were against Separation from this Church to the Day of their Death, and as much against it then as ever. The Reverend Mr. *James Hog*, in a Sermon a few Months before his Death, declared in the plainest Terms against Separation from the Church of *Scotland*, or from her Judicatories, affirming ||, that, "While our Standards remain pure, and there is a professed Adherence to them, we ought not to separate:" And, having mentioned sundry of the gross Corruptions which were in the Churches of *Corinth*, *Galatia* and the *Asiatick* Churches, said, "In these Events there is no Warrant from the Lord to the purer Part to sever themselves from the impure, tho' more numerous, and to constitute a distinct Body; nay, they ought to endeavour Reformation, continuing in Communion, and testifying regularly against what is wrong, without turning aside to any crooked Way, *Psal.* cxxv. 5." And the Arguments of those Worthies militate against Separation from her now, as well as in the Time in which they lived; and nothing can be instanced since their Decease, which would be reckoned sufficient Ground of Separation by them. 4. As to the violent Intrusions, and her being erroneous; beside what hath been said already upon those Subjects, they may be further considered afterwards.

10. Tho' Providence alone is not to be our Rule, yet the Lord's Doings, and the Operations of his Hand, are to be regarded. And Separation being an Evil against which God hath often testified his Displeasure, by separating Separatists from one another, and giving them up to gross Errors; this, with other Arguments, may have Weight to make us guard against it. History gives an Account of one Mr. *Johnson*, who with his two Sons was among the first that separated from the Churches in *England*: He and his Sons kept together for a While, but ere long the two Brothers divided; and, when the Father could not reconcile them,

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|| Letter to a Friend in 1733.

he left the one Son, adhering to the other: But, after this, Differences fell in between that Son and the Father; So that they all three excommunicated one another for small Matters, rejecting the Mediation of the Presbytery of *Amsterdam* when offered for Reconciliation. They had gone over to *Holland* in Queen *Elisabeth's* Time, where they had a Congregation ‡. *Mather*, in his History of *New-England* ||, gives an Account of one Mr. *Roger Williams*, who, being a Preacher coming from *Old-England* to *Boston* in *New-England*, was one of the first that made Separation from their Churches; for he refused to communicate with the Church of *Boston*, because they would not make a publick and solemn Declaration of Repentance for their having communicated with the Church of *England* while they were in the Realm thereof. "This Man being Pastor to a Church in *Salem* in *New-England*, tho' he had formerly bragged or boasted, That of all the Churches of the World those of *New-England* were the purest, and of all in *New-England* that whereof he was the Teacher; yet there he set up for so much Strictness, that he told his Congregation, If they would not separate from all the Churches in *New-England*, as well as from the Churches of *Old-England*, he would separate from them; But his Congregation in *Salem* refusing to go in with his Proposals, he separated from them, and would never have any Communion with any Person in it, nay, not with his own Wife, that went into their Assemblies; keeping a Meeting at the same Time in his own House, whereto resorted such as he had infected with his Extravagancies: And, tho' Pains was taken upon this Man, yet he went on in his Ways, renouncing all the Churches of *New-England*." Yet after this he acquitted himself, so that *Mather* says, Many judged him to have had the Root of the Matter in him. The best of Men are but Men; and zealous worthy good Men may mistake, and go far aside. Again, we had a clear Instance of this since the Revolution, in Messieurs *John Hepburn*, *James Gilchrist* and *John Taylor*, who, in the Synod of *Dumfries*, joined together in Presbytery after separating from the Church of *Scotland*, yet soon brake into Pieces, dividing among themselves; this was in 1716.

And as for Errors, frequently Separatists have been left to fall into gross ones. *Jerom* and *Augustine* write of *Donatus*, from whom the *Donatists* had their Name and Ori-

ginal,
 ‡ *Baillie's Dissuasive*, p. 14, 15. *Sheffield* on Conscience, p. 229, || Book 7. p. 7.

ginal, That as he taught such as joined themselves to him were to be rebaptized, so likewise that the Son of God was inferior to the *Father*, and that the *Holy Ghost* was inferior to the Son. And for *Separatists* falling from *Truth* to *Error*, we have had some lamentable Instances in our own Land, particularly in the Case of some eminent Professors in *Aberdeen*; as is to be seen in the *Postscript* to *Rutherford's Letters*.

And such of our *Separatists* as may be of the same Mind with the Author of *Plain Reasons*, seem to have drunk in a very pernicious Principle; for, p. 139. having spoken of the *Aëts*, *Declaration*, *Protestations* and *Remonstrances* of the Church of Scotland in former Times, and of our *Covenants* and *Engagements to Duties*, says, "He cannot see how any can dispense with any of these Things, or live in Peace and Unity with these who do, without Guilt of Covenant-breaking, if not Apostasy and Perjury." Strange! Not to have Freedom to live in Peace and Unity with such as may differ from us in Principle. The Apostle's Rule is, To follow Peace with all Men: Were all the *Aëts* for Reformation in former Times of such indispensable Necessity, that none of them could be dispensed with? The General Assembly 1648, Sess. 31. enacted, *That hereafter all Persons whatsoever should take the Covenant at the first receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. Now, as this *Aët* hath long been dispensed with since its first Enacting, and is dispensed with at this Day by all, and that most justly; for I dare say, the King of *Zion* never designed to make it a Term of Communion, so as no serious Soul, who might scruple to take that solemn Oath because of some Expression in it, should not be admitted to his Table: So it had surely been much more for the Honour of some of our Separatists, they had dispensed with that *Aët* when they renewed the Covenant at *Douglas*, I think, in 1712, before partaking of the Lord's Supper, than to have turned it to an *et cætera* Oath, as they did by their Explication sworn to at that Time: For after these Words in our National Covenant, Or *Approbation of the Corruptions of the publick Government of the Kirk, or Civil Places and Power of Kirkmen*, in the Margin they add, "Or any Corruptions thereof, *Prelatick* or *Evastian*, either tried or to be tried; such as the Indulgence, the Toleration, the Magistrates appointing Fasts without Advice and Consent of the Church, dissolving Assemblies, &c." This made the Covenant an Oath which in Judgment no Person could swear; for by that *et cætera* he swears, and he knows not to what. Bishop Hall declares, He never

ver had Freedom to administer that Oath to any in his Diocese, which was called the *Et cetera Oath*, and imposed in his Time. What Man of any Conscience will swear blindly? And for such as make the Brethrens Testimony a Term of Christian Communion, in my Opinion, they have drunk in a very great Error, an Error which cannot but be condemned by all the Churches of Christ.

Now, besides these Arguments, many others may be adduced against Division in, or Separation from, a true Church (the Cases above-narrated being still excepted) tho' her Faults should be many.

To separate is to act against the Command of *the great God our Saviour*, who in his Word commands us to guard against *forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the Manner of some is*, Heb. x. 25. The Differences among the Churches of the *Hebrews*, anent the Meaning and Observation of the Ceremonial Law, were many; and it seems their Divisions were such, that some separated from others, perhaps out of Pride or Singularity, as *Calvin* says. Hence the Apostle exhorts them to beware of *forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as the Manner of some was*; while, instead of this, he exhorts them to *provoke one another to Love*, V. 24. as the Apostle, speaking in the Name and Authority of his Lord and Master, 1 Cor. i. 10. says, *Now I beseech you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same Thing, that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.* And Separation is a Walking in Opposition to that Command, wherein he has enjoined all his Disciples to *love one another**. "Men seldom separate," says judicious Manton †, but their Hearts are much estranged from those from whom they separate; for religious Ties, being once broken, are hardly made up again. Civil Ruptures are not carried on with such Vehemency, and are sooner closed again; But Religion, being the highest Bond and Ligament, when it is once violated the Breach is the more irreconcilable." 'Tis indeed to be lamented, that, as he says, "Many that pretend much to Religion make no Conscience of Schism and offending the Brethren, by withdrawing from them, as if Christ's Precepts of Love were not to be stood upon." Separate Practices seldom or never fail to occasion Separation or Alienation in Affections; and where this

Ini-

* John xiv. 34. Eph. v. 2. † On Jude, p. 493.

Iniquity abounds, the Love of many, to such as are not of their Party, often becomes Ice-cold.

Again, 'tis contrary to the Design of Christ our Lord his Death. Angels at his Birth sang sweetly, saying, *Glory to God in the Higbest, on Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men.* He came, as to purchase Peace with God; so also that his People might be at Peace among themselves. Hence, *Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16.* 'tis said, *He is our Peace, who hath made both one*, speaking of *Jews and Gentiles*. And in the 16th Verse 'tis said, *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the Cross, having slain the Enmity.* 'Tis a good Note of Mr. Fergusson upon that Scripture, "Union in the Church of Christ is a Thing which ought to be highly prized by us.—For so much was it prized by Christ, that he gave his own Life to procure it, and did bear down all his own Ordinances which stood in the Way of it: *He even abolished in his Flesh the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, for to make of twain one new Man.*"

Further, 'tis a Sin which is against the Intercession of Christ, as in his last Prayer, *John xvii.* He prayed again and again for Unity among his Members, and against Division or Separation, as in the 11th Verse, where he says, *Holy Father, keep thro' thine own Name these whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one.* And again, in the 21st Verse, he prays for all that believe on him, that they may be one. And the Argument he makes Use of in pleading for this is, *That the World may know that thou hast sent me.* The Argument implies, "That our Divisions, and breaking into Sects, would breed Suspicion of the Gospel in the Hearts of Men, as if that great Mystery of Redemption wrought by him were but a well-devised Fable." Unity and Concord among Brethren, this tends to commend Christ for a Lord and Master to others; whereas Rents, Schisms, and a being divided so as to separate, this tends to make the Enemies of the Prince of Peace turn *Atheists*.

Moreover, to separate from the Church of Scotland at this Day, 'tis interpretatively a Condemning of Christ the Head of the Church, as if he was to be blamed, seeing he yet keeps Communion with her. And, as *Durham* says, *It is too much Nicety not to keep Communion with them with whom he keeps Communion.* And tho' alas we want not Ground to lament bitterly because of our Iniquities, for which the Lord's Presence is withdrawn in a great Measure from

from Publick, Private and Secret; yet as we are not to despise the Day of small Things, so the Lord our heavenly Father has not as yet given our Mother a Bill of Divorce. We may say as 'tis, *Jer. xv. 5. For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, tho' their Land was filled with Sin against the Holy One of Israel.* Sons and Daughters are yet begotten and born to the Lord by a preached Gospel in this Land; Ministers and People at Times can yet speak of his Glory in the Sanctuary. And here it may be said to such as separate themselves from us, as Mr. Hog said in his first Letter to Separatists in 1717, p. 6. "Only let our Friends know, that, in setting up distinct
" Congregations and Judicatories, they not only withdraw
" from judicious and eminently godly Ministers and private
" Christians, but do also consequentially go far towards a
" dooming them to Hell, as owning themselves to be in
" the Communion of a Church that is no true Church,
" and with which (according to their Principles) the Lord
" Jesus entertains no more any Communion; for certainly
" their setting up separated Judicatories and Churches
" will imply so much, or else they must say that they will
" have no Fellowship with Churches with whom the Lord
" Jesus doth entertain Communion." And again he saith,
" Tho' the Whoredoms of a Mother-church have given
" just Cause to the Husband to divorce her, yet, while he
" hath not done so, 'tis highly provoking, and a very un-
" kindly Office in the Children to anticipate." Separation
from Churches from which Christ doth not separate, is Schismatical, says Jenkyn. And then he adds, "Now
" 'tis clear in the Scripture, that Christ owneth Churches
" where Faith is found for the Substance, and their Wor-
" ship Gospel-worship, tho' there be many Defects and
" sinful Mixtures among them."

Consider also, how hurtful and fatal Division, and much more Separation, is to the Church of Christ. *A Kingdom,* says our Lord, *divided against itself is brought to Desolation,* Mat. xii. 25. There is nothing more ruining to a Church or Nation, than to be divided; *Machiavell's* Maxim is too true, *Divide, and then rule over a People.* The intestine Broils and Divisions which were among the *Jews* proved ruining when the *Romans* came against them in the Days of *Vespasian* and *Titus*, when Eleven hundred thousand of them were cut off. Division in, and Separation from a Church, is the Devil's Musick, in which, says one, *his cloven Foot is evident;* as this is also the Musick of all the Church's Ad-
ver-

versaries, who rarely miss to blow this Coal. History gives an Account how *Julian the Apostate* cherished Differences between the *Catholicks* and *Donatists*; and then affirmed, no savage Beast was more Cruel to one another than the Christians. Hence also, in Differences between the *Protesters* and *Publick Resolutioners*, the *English*, who had the Government, took the Advantage of these, studying to hold them up rather than remove them: For General *Monk* seem'd to favour the *Protesters*, and *Brogbill*, who was President of the Council, the *Resolutioners* *. *Romanists* have always done their utmost to divide *Protestants* among themselves, and sometimes by putting on a Mask of extraordinary Zeal to carry on their Designs. And *Dispensations* can be had for the like to this. In 1580, *Petrie* † says, "Dispensations were sent from *Rome*, permitting Papists to promise, swear, subscribe, and to do what other Things might be required of them, if in Mind they continued firm to the Popish Interest." And, according to him, those *Dispensations* gave the first Rise to our *National Covenant*, in which *Papistry* is so pointedly abjured.

Further, Separation is reckoned by the Apostle among the Works of the Flesh, which all ought to beware of; and People may be as much inclined to this from a bad Principle, as to gratify a fleshly Lust. And *Durham* says, *As there is an itching after new Doctrines in some, so is there for Division in others.* Gal. v. 19, 20. Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest; which are these,——Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions. The Greek Word *δυσωσιας*, there rendered *Seditions*, signifies a Renting of those who ought to be united in one common Society. Jude xix. There, says the Apostle, *These are they who separate themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit.* Sometimes Separatists have made high Pretences to the Spirit, and yet been sensual. And the Assembly 1641, in their Act against Impiety and Schism in Meetings for mutual Edification, having advised to eschew all such Meetings as are apt to breed Error, Scandal and Schism, they expressly say, *These are Works of the Flesh, but not of the Spirit, and are contrary to Truth and Peace.*

As also, this tends vastly to the Hurt of Religion, eating out the Life thereof, exhausting the very Vitals of Christianity, worming out the Power of Godliness; for, when this creeps in, then People are taken up with a publick Religion. Hence Professor *Halyburton* ‡, in Prospect of

* *Sempil's Life.* † Cent. 16. p. 406, ‡ *Memoirs*, p. 180;

approaching Death, said, "If Ministers go on in separating Courses, the Result of it will be, People will be taken up with the Publick, and forget private Religion. — We shall have People running about seeking to have their Ears gratified, that love not the Power of Godliness" And, alas, 'tis to be feared this may be the Case of sundry in our Day, in which I hear serious People regrette the Converse of many Professors evidence it is so, being still upon the Publick, and the Conduct of Ministers.

Moreover, to separate from a true Church of Christ, this hath a direct Tendency to mar the Success of the glorious Gospel, whether they be Ministers or People that separate. If they be in any Reputation for Religion, Piety or Parts, then weak People are ready to think such as they separate from, or refuse to join in Communion with, must surely be naughty Men, Men of lax Consciences, Men whom God will not own; and this, at least, is ready to beget Prejudice, and where once People are prejudiced at a Minister, 'tis rare they get Good of his Ministry.

Many other Arguments might be adduced against this Evil of Separation, as 'tis a Sin which hindereth the great Christian Duty of edifying one another in Love; 'tis a staining of Christ our Lord and Master's Livery, which is Love. *All Men, says he, shall know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another,* John xiii. 35. This is commonly said to be a Renting of Christ's seamless Coat, and sundry other Evils are included in, and follow upon Separation from a true Church; and hence the Apostle is so pathetick in pressing to keep the Unity of the Spirit, *Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* and again, when writing to the *Philippians*, Chap. ii. 1, 2 Verses.

CHAP. VI.

In which the Objections of Separatists are answered.

1st Obje. **T**HE Church of Scotland is not to be joined with, in regard the *Revolution Church*, to which she hath succeeded, was so corrupt in her Constitution, being made up for the most Part of such Ministers as had gone in to the *publick Resolutions*, accepted of the

the *Indulgence*, or *Toleration*, or sworn *unlawful Oaths*, &c.
Answer. Tho' granted these Things might be Ground of
 Scruple to some tender Persons at the *Revolution*, when
 some of those Men lived, yet they cannot be Ground of
 Separation now, seeing none who had approved the
publick Resolutions, accepted the *Indulgence* or *Toleration*, or
 swore those Oaths, are alive. Indeed, if the Church of
Scotland was requiring it as a Term of Communion in any
 of her Members that they approve of these, then to such
 as have Scruples anent them this would be Ground of Se-
 paration from her; but this is far from being the Case. And
 albeit I join not with one more than another in these de-
 bateable Points, yet I humbly think none of them was
 Ground sufficient for Separation. And here, I consider
 each of these in so many *Sections*.

S E C T. I.

*In which the Objection from the publick
 Resolutions is considered.*

Concerning those, 1st, Tho' I have still inclined to
 think the *Protesters* had the best Cause in that Contro-
 versy, yet the *Resolutioners* wanted not much to say for
 themselves, as is evident from their Writings published in
 those Times: For, that Commission which met at *Perth*,
December 14. 1650. to whom the Parliament proposed the
 Question, "What Persons are to be admitted to rise in
 Arms, and to join with the Forces of the Kingdom,
 and in what Capacity, for Defence thereof against the
 Armies of the *Seſſaries*, who, contrary to the Solemn
 League and Covenant and Treaties, have most unjustly
 invaded, and are destroying the Kingdom?" In An-
 swer, Tho' they were not against raising all the sensible
 Men, or all such as were able to bear Arms, and permit-
 ting them to fight, because of the present Necessity, the
 Forces formerly raised being so ruined and scattered, that
 there was not any considerable Power of them remaining;
 yet they expressly excepted "All such as were excommu-
 nicated, forfeited, notoriously profane or flagitious, or
 such as from the Beginning had been, and continued still
 to be obstinate professed Enemies and Opposers of the
 Covenant and Cause of God." And for the Capacity of
 Acting, in Answer to the Estates of Parliament, that Com-
 mission

mission says, " As they ought, so we hope they, viz. the
 " *Estates of Parliament*, will have special Care that, in this
 " so general a Concurrence of all the People of the King-
 " dom, none be put in such Trust and Power as may be
 " prejudicial to the Cause of God; and that such Officers
 " as are of known Integrity and Affection to the Cause,
 " and particularly such as have suffered in our former Ar-
 " mies, may be taken special Notice of." And in Answer
 to that other Question which was proposed by the King
 and Parliament to that Commission, May 24. 1651. name-
 ly, " Whether or no it was sinful and unlawful to admit
 " such to be Members of the Committee of Estates who
 " had been debarred from the publick Trust former-
 " ly, they being such as have satisfied the Kirk for the Of-
 " fence for which they were excluded?" desiring also
 to know their Mind anent rescinding the Act of *Classes*;
The Commission, after declaring it was not competent for
 them to make or repeal Acts of Parliament, nor would
 they determine the keeping or rescinding of that Act, an-
 swered, " They thought such might be admitted to Pla-
 " ces of Trust, provided they whom they admitted be
 " Men who have satisfied the Kirk for their former Of-
 " fences, have renewed or taken the Covenant, and be
 " qualified for such Places with the Qualifications requi-
 " red in the Word of God, and expressed in the solemn
 " Acknowledgment and Engagement, viz. That they be
 " Men of known good Affection to the Cause of God, and
 " of a blameless and Christian Conversation, which ought
 " always carefully to be observed and made Conscience of,
 " tho' there were no such Act of Classes, to the Effect
 " that no Persons get such Power and Trust into their
 " Hands as may be prejudicial to the Cause of God *."

Now, these Answers given by that Commission were
 what was called, *The publick Resolutions*; and had their Ad-
 vices been strictly followed, as indeed they were not, 'tis
 probable the Harm by these *Resolutions* had not been so
 great. The *Protesters*, again, were against taking in any of
 these to the *Army* or *Judicatories* that had opposed the Work
 of Reformation from 1637, who were called *Malignants*,
 and had been opposite to the Liberties of the Kirk and
 Kingdom,

* See *Observations on the Differences of the Kirk*, published
 1653. Also, *The true Representation of the Rise, Progress,
 and State of the Divisions of the Church of Scotland*, pub-
 lished 1657. and *Woodrow's History*, 1st Vol. Introduct.
 P. 3, 4.

Kingdom, tho' professing Repentance; being afraid, lest these coming into Places of Power and Trust, would have the King's Ear, and so be instrumental in overturning the Work of Reformation attained unto since 1638. And indeed in this they were not far mistaken.

2dly, Tho' these *Resolutions* occasioned a most lamentable Rent in the Church, yet some worthy Servants of the Lord, who were no *Gallios*, never had Freedom to join with either Side; as the learned, tender and judicious *Durham*, who could not see the Matter so clear as to approve of the one and condemn the other: And, seeing he lived in that Day, and had Occasion to understand the Controversy better than we can at this Distance of Time, and yet wanted Clearness to join with either Party; it may be some Excuse for such as are not clear upon that Point at this Day.

3dly, As there were sundry worthy eminent Men upon the Side of the *Protesters*, as Mr. *Samuel Rutherford* Professor of Divinity in the College of *St. Andrews*, who was a Member of the *Westminster* Assembly, Mr. *James Guthrie* who suffered Martyrdom for the Cause of Christ, Mr. *John Livingstone*, Mr. *Alexander Moncrieff*, Mr. *Andrew Cant*, and others; so also there were sundry eminent Ministers upon the Side of the *Publick Resolutions*, as Mr. *David Dickson* Moderator to the Assembly 1639, Mr. *Robert Blair* Moderator to the Assembly 1640, Mr. *Robert Douglas* Moderator to the Assemblies 1642, 1645, 1647, 1649, and a Member of the *Westminster* Assembly, Mr. *James Wood* Professor of Divinity in the University of *St. Andrews*, Mr. *Robert Baillie* Principal or Professor of Divinity in the College of *Glasgow*, and a Member to the *Westminster* Assembly, with others.

4thly, Tho' some Separatists scruple not to brand the *Publick Resolutioners*, as Men that had *apostatized* foully, and very foully, calling them *perjured* *; yet the *Protesters* themselves were far from this Temper: Hence the Author or Authors of the *Review of the Vindication* of the Assembly at *St. Andrews* 1651, P. 14. when speaking of the *Publick Resolutioners*, says, "I know none that traduce these godly Men as Apostates; yea, I know and am persuaded, that the *Protesters* have a high and honourable Estimation of them for their Piety, Parts, and for the great Things whereof the Lord has made sundry of them instrumental in his House."

5thly, Concerning these *Publick Resolutions*, Mr. *Livingstone*,

* *Plain Reasons*, P. 2.

June, in his Letter from Rotterdam to his Parishioners of *Amsterdam*, wished that the Fire which was kindled by them were extinguished and forgotten: And the Author of *Jus populi vindicatum*, published 1669, a Book to which some of the Martyrs adhere in their dying Testimonies, speaking of that Debate between the Protesters and Resolutioners, says, P. 323: "But, as we wish it had never been heard of, so we desire it may be buried in perpetual Oblivion." And a worthy Minister in this Church told me, that, sometime after the Revolution, when speaking anent the Publick Resolutions to the Reverend Mr. Edward Jamieson (who had been deposed by the opposite Party for standing up for the Protestation) said, "I was a Protester, and I never saw Cause to repent it; yet, if any Minister would now revive that Controversy, I would have all Freedom to vote his Deposition."

6thly, Some have observed, it was the lamentable Division anent the Resolutions which brought in Prelacy at the Restoration: However, when they came to the Furnace, it seems these Differences were forgot; for, at granting the Indulgence, it was offered to Mr. Robert Douglas Minister at Edinburgh, that the Publick Resolutioners should only have the Favour of being indulged: To which he generously replied, "We have no Differences, and, except it be given without Distinction of Parties, I shall never accept it; adding, That the Protesters should be indulged before he was." *Sempit's Life*. *Wodrow* says, In 1658 they agreed that none of either Side should be questioned in their Judicatories for their different Practices, Vol. 1. P. 40. And it was truly lamentable ever they should have divided upon seemingly such narrow Points, which some have thought were Questions that did not much concern the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline nor Government of the Church of Scotland, being practical Questions upon State-affairs: But, if the Lord divide in his Anger, there is no keeping unite, and the smallest Things may be a Handle to rent and divide a Church. I know 'tis said *, The Publick Resolutions were a Step of Defection against which the Church of Scotland was sworn in the Solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties: But this is positively denied by the Resolutioners; and hence, in the Review of that Pamphlet intituled, *Protesters no Subverters*, P. 58. they affirm, "That this Paper, viz. *The Solemn Engagement*, was so contrived of Purpose, as it might not pre-

"condemn

* Second Testimony, P. 26.

“condemn these *Resolutions*, if ever it should be needful to take them.” And, in P. 60. having asserted, “That, in case of common Hazard and Combustion, it will be hard to persuade rational Christians but that foul Water may very lawfully be made use of to quench Fire;” A little after they say, “We are sure that the Commission shortly after did, upon the Debate, word the Solemn Engagement so as it might not precondemn that *Thefts*, as is said before and is elsewhere cleared.”

And, 7thly, To conclude this Particular, it seems many of God's dear Saints who lived 70 Years ago, and had better Opportunity to understand that Controversy, they either thought it would be a Fault to keep up the Remembrance of these *Publick Resolutions*, or they had not such deep Impressions of the Evil of them; for of all the *Martyrs* whose *Testimonies* are recorded in *Naphtali*, from the Marquis of *Argyle*, who suffered May 27th 1661, to the Death of *James Learmont*, who suffered at *Edinburgh* September 27th 1678, I think none of them make the least Mention of these *Resolutions* in their dying *Testimonies*, never a Word of their being a publick national Sin, but only Mr. *Gutbrie*; for the Marquis of *Argyle*, the Lord *Waristoun*, Mr. *Alexander Robertson*, Mr. *Hugh McKail*, Mr. *James Mitchell*, and others, being 24 in all, never drop a Word anew them. Yet, after all, I have full Freedom to condemn the *Resolutioners* for their suspending, deposing or putting any Minister or Elder from their Charges, or excluding them from sitting in General Assemblies, for protesting against the *Publick Resolutions*: And also, I think, they were to be blamed for obliging Intrants to the Ministry, and Elders before they sat in Presbytery, to declare under their Hand, that they passed from the *Declinature* or *Protestation* against the Assemblies ensuing these *Resolutions*.

And, on the other Hand, there were Sentences past by the *Protesters* in some Judicatories against the *Resolutioners*, which can as little be justified, such as their thrusting in Pastors of their own Party upon Congregations against their Will; for which the *Resolutioners* complain heavily in their *Review and Examination* of that Pamphlet, which was intitled, *Protesters no Subverters*, printed 1659, where they accuse the *Protesters* of misregarding the Inclinations of the People, terming the intruding a Minister upon a People, *An Usurpation and a wronging of the Liberty of the People*. And, in that little Piece which was published 1657, intitled, *A true Representation of the Rise, Progress and State*

of the present Divisions of the Church of Scotland, the *Resolutions*, P. 38. say, " It is a Thing most ordinary with our Brethren to obtrude Ministers upon Congregations, sometimes contrary to the Mind of the whole Congregation, sometimes of the greater Part thereof, upon the Call only of some very few and inconsiderable Part of that Congregation, &c." And, particularly in the Time of that lamentable Difference, I'm credibly informed, the Register of the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling* bears, that the *Protesters* settled one of their own Party at *Dunkeld*, when the Body of the Congregation was entirely opposite. And, from such Considerations, the Assembly 1690 saw it needful to declare all Sentences past against any Ministers by either Party *hinc inde*, to be null and void to all Effects and Intents.

S E C T. II.

In which the Objection of Separatists, relating to the Indulgence, is considered.

I Proceed now to a *second* Thing complained of in the Constitution of this Church at the Revolution, namely, That she was made up in a great Measure of such Ministers as had accepted the *Indulgence*, which the Author of *Plain Reasons*, in his modest Style, p. 3. calls " A quitting their Holding of Christ, and a most sinful submitting to an exotick Head, and receiving a new Mission from the then King." A heavy Charge! And tho' I'm not to justify nor plead for the *Indulgence*, yet could those Men seen sufficient Ground for it, I'm apt to think, yea persuaded, they would sooner parted with Life, than been thus guilty. Now, concerning that *Indulgence* which the Civil Magistrate granted to some particular Ministers to preach the Gospel without Disturbance;

1st, The *Indulgence* not being the Controversy of our Day, considering what lamentable Rents it occasioned in former Times among godly Ministers and People in this Church, as I said of the *Resolutions*; so here the reviving Debates anent it might be unseasonable at this Time.

2^{dly}, Concerning the *Indulgence* or *Indulgences*; It is owned, even by the Indulged themselves, That in the Civil Magistrate his Actings and Behaviour concerning them, there wanted not much Sin.

3^{dly}, As for the *Indulged*, 'tis owned by all, if it be not

some few like *Plain Reasons*, that generally they were worthy and godly Men, *eminent Lights*, who had chosen Sufferings rather than Sin; Men that had left all, rather than comply with Prelacy and the other Defections of their Day. Mr. *Livingstone*, in his *Letter from Holland to his Parishoners*, tho' he condemns the Indulged for accepting the *Indulgence* without a *publick Testimony* against the Magistrates Usurpations, yet declared he had *great Charity* for most of the Men that were indulged. And that zealous Martyr, Mr. *Jamas Mitchel* who suffered in 1678, in his *Testimony*, tho' he condemns the *Indulgence*, yet says, "I have very much Charity, Love and Affection to many of the Ministers who have embraced the same, saying, They have not wickedly departed from the Lord."

4thly, Concerning the *Indulgences*. Tho' the first was granted July 27th 1669, and the second in September 1672; yet till 1677 or 1678, which was for eight or nine Years after granting that first *Indulgence*, 'tis said, honest People heard the Indulged as well as the Field-preachers, as they had Occasion, without any Scruple. And it was not till the Year 1679, that any Minister or Preacher offered to preach against the *Indulgence*: And for about ten Years the Indulged and Non-indulged lived in Peace and Love; and the Non-indulged studied by all Means to keep up an Esteem of the Indulged, albeit sundry of them had never relish'd the *Indulgence*.

5thly, The Division that arose after that proved fatal at *Botbwell*. And here indeed it ran so high, that because the famous Mr. *John Welsch* had not then Freedom publicly to mention the *Indulgence* as a Step of Defection and Cause of Fasting, the opposite Party termed him the *Acban in their Camp*. And indeed their Divisions and Effects following upon them, after some began to preach against the *Indulgence*, were Matter of deep Mourning: For tho' formerly there had been different Sentiments as to the *Resolutions*, as to *paying the Cess*, and as to the *Indulgence*; yet till this Time, viz. the Time when these Divisions began, as Mr. *Sbields* says *, which I noticed before, *Ministers and Professors were unite, and with one Soul and Shoulder followed the Work of the Lord*.

6thly, Concerning the *Indulgence*, I own, considered in its complex Acts and Circumstances, there were sad Evils in it with respect to the Civil Magistrate: And also, I humbly think it was the Fault of the Indulged they were not

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more

* *Hind let loose*, p. 121.

more expresse, explicate, full, free and faithful in their Testimony against the *Erastian* Encroachments of the Magistrate in that Business; yet that Omission was not sufficient Ground of Separation, nor did the Non-indulged Ministers think so †.

But, 7thly, Whereas the great Thing complained of in the Indulged is, That they accepted this Favour when clogged with many sinful Restrictions. The Indulged always refused ever they accepted the Indulgence upon such Restrictions or Conditions; and when called before the Council July 8th 1673, for not observing the Twenty ninth of May, they declared, "They could not receive any Rules or Instructions from the Magistrate, which were intrinsically Ecclesiastical, being the Servants of Jesus Christ."

8thly, As the Indulged refused that ever they accepted the Indulgence upon any such Terms, so 'tis pretty evident they did not observe them. And hence from Time to Time we find the Indulged cited before the Council for not observing these Instructions, till at length they were all deprived of that *Liberty* or *Indulgence* which had been granted; as is to be seen in *Wodrow's History* ‡. And, when they were turned out, they gave Evidence of being Men of Conscience, who choosed still rather to suffer than knowingly to sin: For in 1684, when the Indulged in the Shire of *Ayr* were all turned out upon refusing the *Test*, and being required to bind themselves to exercise no Part of their Ministerial Function until the King and Council gave them Allowance; they all, except one or two, peremptorily refused to come under any such Ties or Obligations, as being a subjecting their Ministry they had received of the Lord to the King: Upon which they were sent to the *Bass*, and other Prisons, where they endured no small Hardships ||. And the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Archer*, who was eminent for Learning and Grace, a worthy Minister and Martyr for *Christ*, in his dying Testimony is thought to have spoken solidly, when he said *, "Divisions and Contendings have been the Undoing of this Church first and last, but I think more of late, and more shamefully than ever, the Matter being so small (if wisely considered) about which all this Noise hath been made. I

† *Wod. Hist.* Vol. 1. p. 354. ‡ Vol. 1. p. 309, 330, 335, 356, 360, 380, 384, 391, 430, 431. Vol. 2. p. 4, 27, 126, 176, 351, 352, 353, 354, 359, 412. || *Wod. Hist.* Vol. 2. p. 412. * *Wod. Hist.* Vol. 2. p. 554.

" take not upon me to justify the indulged Ministers, nei-
 " ther will I rigidly condemn them : But, if the separa-
 " ting from their Ministry, and pressing the Matter with
 " such Heat and Violence, shall be found to be good Ser-
 " vice done to *Christ*, I have read the Scriptures wrong ; and
 " the sad Consequences of it are convincing enough, if
 " People were humble and convincible. It was this Con-
 " tention which expelled that profitable and most edifying
 " Exercise of mutual Prayer and Christian Conference
 " (that I may say nothing how it drove from the Shepherds
 " Tents) upon which followed a sensible Decay in the Ex-
 " ercise of Godliness."

And, lastly, Whatever was amiss or culpable in the *In-
 dulgences*, yet 'tis evident the Ministry of the *Indulged* was
 attended with remarkable Success. Mr. *Wodrow* says, p. 309.
 " It must be owned the Lord eminently countenanced the
 " Labours and Ministry of the *Indulged*; and they could
 " not but acknowledge they had as great and sensible Assi-
 " stance in the Work of the Gospel as ever they had for-
 " merly known: And their Success among their Hearers
 " was not small." So also that pious Gentleman of very
 " good Sense whom he cites, p. 532. says, " God was un-
 " questionably at Work upon the Hearts of People, by the
 " Ministry of the Word, both in Fields, and in the
 " Churches by the *Indulged*, and that both in Conversion
 " and Edification." And I have heard sundry eminent
 Christians speak of this from their own Experience. So I
 humbly think our Brethren are to blame for insinuating, as
 p. 39. of their second Testimony, That it was only the Mi-
 nistry of some few of them which was attended with Suc-
 cess; as also, when there they insinuate, as if the Instru-
 ctions given them had been punctually observed by most,
 or the Generality of the *Indulged*.

At granting the second *Indulgence* there was an *Indul-
 gence* granted in *England*, in which I think there were Ex-
 pressions of as harsh a Nature as any Thing in the *Scottish*
Indulgence; yet I have not heard of any *English* Dissenter
 who entertained Scruples anent it. I am sure the great Do-
 ctor *Owen*, as the Author of *Plain Reasons* justly calls him,
 had full Freedom to accept of it. Hence, in *Preface* of his
Enquiry into the original Nature, &c. of Evangelical Churches,
 again and again he speaks of the Dissenters, " Their thank-
 " ful Acceptance of that Indulgence, making use of the
 " King's Royal Favour after so many Years Suffering ; ad-
 " ding, We were glad to take a little Breathing-space from

“ our Troubles under his Majesty’s Royal Protection; —
 “ and, if this were a Crime, *babetis confitentem reum* as to
 “ my Part:” Which, upon the Matter, was as if he had
 said, I have not seen the Evil of it. And, by what follows
 in that *Preface*, it seems he had been consulted by some of
 the Statesmen as to the granting of that *Indulgence*, tho’ he
 rejects it as a vile Slander, that ever any had consulted with
 him as to any Indulgence or Toleration unto Papists. And
 such Considerations as this, That *Owen* approved of such
 an Indulgence, may make some a little softer in their Cen-
 sure here. And tho’ I have not entred upon any Debate as
 to the Lawfulness of accepting the *Indulgence*, yet such as
 have read the *Answers* that have been written unto the *Hi-*
story thereof, cannot but see the Indulged had not a little
 to say for themselves: And I know not but the lamentable
 Rents and Divisions, which followed upon the *Resolutions*
 and *Indulgences*, might be as much Ground of Mourning
 and Lamentation as the Things themselves.

S E C T. III.

In which the Objection of Separatists, re-
lating to the Toleration, is answered.

I Come now to the *third* Thing complained of in the
Constitution of the Church of Scotland at the Revolution,
 particularly by the Author of *Plain Reasons*, p. 4. namely,
 “ That she was crowded by such Ministers as had ad-
 “ dressed for the Duke of York’s boundless blasphemous
 “ Toleration.” And concerning it, as on the former
 Heads, it may be said, all the Accepters being dead, it
 can be no Ground for Separation at this Day. *2dly*, Tho’
 I am not to plead for that Toleration, yet seeing almost all,
 if not all, and every Minister in Scotland, if it was not the
 Reverend Mr. *Renwick*, had full Freedom to accept of it,
 these not excepted who were suffering by lying in Prisons,
 and under other Hardships for Christ and his Cause; and
 most of the Presbyterian Ministers, who had retired to
 foreign Countries, or had been banished, returning home
 and accepting thereof, embracing that Opportunity of
 preaching the Gospel: Therefore I dare not take upon
 me to condemn them, because they might have other and
 clearer Views of Things relating to it than I can pretend
 to. And ’tis known the Lord remarkably blessed the Mi-
 nistry

stry of his Servants who at that Time accepted the *Toleration*, as in the Case of that worthy Servant of Christ, the Reverend Mr. *Henry Erskine*, Father to the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer* and Mr. *Ralph Erskine*, whom sometimes I had Occasion to hear at his Meeting-house in the *Newtown* of *Whitson*. And considering what he had suffered for Christ, and the many Experiences he had of the Lord's remarkable appearing for him in Straits, if he had not seen this to be his Duty, he had never accepted of that Toleration. But, 3dly, I and every Person else may have full Freedom to condemn the Author of *Plain Reasons* for his hateful Falshoods and Slanders, to impose upon the World in his Account of this Matter, they being no fewer than seven or eight in one Page or Paragraph, namely, the fifth Page of that Book; where, 1. He affirms of Ministers who accepted this *Toleration*, that they addressed for it: For, having read *Wodrow's History*, he could not but know it was absolutely refused that ever they or any Friend of theirs made Application to King or any Courtier for such a Favour. 2. 'Tis false to say that *Toleration* was clogged with a great many sinful Restrictions and Limitations, and further Limitations; tho' indeed the first Toleration, which no Presbyterian Minister accepted, was. 3dly, 'Tis false to say it directed the Accepters *how* to preach; for there is not a Word in it directing as to the Manner of Preaching. 4thly, 'Tis false to say it directed them *what* to preach. Tho' it contained a Prohibition against preaching *any Thing which might anywise tend to alienate the Hearts of People from the King and his Government*; Yet this was no Direction as to *what* they should preach: For to forbid a Person to do this or that, is not to direct him what to do. 5thly, 'Tis false to say that *Toleration-act* directed Ministers to preach nothing which might alienate the Hearts of the People from that Tyrant in the Execution of his horrid Cruelty and Tyranny, &c. for there are no such Words in it, tho' he puts them in *Italick Characters*, as if the very Words thereof. 6thly, 'Tis false to say this was notour enough from the *Proclamations establishing the same*; for there was but one Proclamation for that Toleration; and in it there is not a Word of his *exercising horrid Cruelty and Tyranny*. 7thly, 'Tis false to say the Ministers who accepted that Toleration, sent up *flattering Letters of Thanksgiving for it*: For the Letter sent was not approven of all, nor was it *Letters* in the plural Number, but only one Letter which they sent; and indeed in my humble Opinion it was too much:

much: For a *Insinuation* against the *Restrictions* therein, had been more proper. There was indeed another *Letter*, or *Address of Thanks*, from the Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* and *Canongate*; but that was not from Ministers who had accepted the Toleration. *Sabbly*, 'Tis false to say, By their *Letter of Thanksgiving*, Ministers declared themselves the Servants of that wicked Prince, and not the Servants of Christ; for People may be very loyal, faithful and obedient Subjects to a wicked Prince, guarding against doing what may alienate the Hearts of People from him and his Government, and yet be the Servants of Christ Jesus: As in the Case of godly *Obadiab* in *Ahab's* Court *, and in the Case of the Saints in *Cesar's* Household †; So in the Case of the Reverend Mr. *Frazer* of *Brea*, whom *Plain Reasons* cites as a Person of Weight, who, when before a Committee of the Council of *Scotland*, in 1677, refused that the Subject of his Sermons were disloyal or traitorous Principles, or that ever he stirred up the People to Sedition by preaching; declaring he was indifferent tho' the Principles of his Heart were as visible to their Lordships as the Traits of his Face. And for as much as *Plain Reasons* says against the Ministers who accepted thereof, yet Mr. *Renwick*, when in Prison, a little before his Death, tho' he condemned the *Toleration*, yet said he judged them godly Men who had accepted thereof ‡.

And tho' I am far from justifying that *Letter* or *Address* of Thanks, or any Thing that looks like Flattery in it; yet I cannot see any such Flattery in that *Address* as was the least Ground of Separation, else there was just Ground of Separation from the Church of *Scotland* in what hath been reckoned her best Times: For in the Supplication of the Assembly 1638 to King *Charles I.* when speaking of his Father, namely, *James VI.* they call him a King of happy Memory; yea, and a King of everlasting Memory. And what a King he was, if you will take Mr. *Shields's* Testimony in his *Hind let loose*, p. 46. then, "contrary to the Word of God, he usurped the Prerogative of Jesus Christ, and assumed to himself the blasphemous Monster of Supremacy over all Persons, and in all Causes as well Ecclesiastical as Civil." And 'tis known he turned out Presbytery, and brought in Prelacy: He imprisoned and banished Christ's faithful Servants, as the great Mr. *Robert Bruce*, &c. brought in *Perth Articles*, and was one who

* 1 Kings xviii. 3. † Phil. iv. 22. ‡ *Wed. Hist.* 2 Vol. p. 635.

authorised Sabbath-profanation, by his Proclamation commonly termed *the Book of Sports*. And if the large Account given of him by the Author of *Plain Reasons* himself, p. 225, 234. is to be credited, then there was never a worse King upon the Throne.

What I have said upon the foregoing Subjects of *Resolutions, Indulgence and Toleration*, is not with a Design to justify them, but only to show the urging of it as present Duty to testify against them as hainous Evils, and to urge them as Causes of solemn Fasting, may be unreasonable at this Day; and to show Charity and Forbearance should be exercised toward them who differ from others in these Points, and that the condemning of them is not to be made a Term of Christian Communion, seeing there have been such different Sentiments as to these among Men of Learning, solid Judgment, and real Piety, in former Times.

S E C T. IV.

Where the Objection of Separatists, relating to the sinful Oaths which were taken by some before the Revolution, is answered.

Proceed now to a *Fourth* Thing complained of in the Constitution of this Church at the *Revolution*, by the Author of *Plain Reasons**, and other Separatists, namely, "That she was framed of such Ministers and ruling Elders as had, for the most Part, their Consciences sadly stained with sinful Oaths, (at least with one or more of them) such as, (1.) The National Declaration (2.) The Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy. (3.) The Bond of Peace, to live peaceably. (4.) The Bond of Regularity. (5.) Some Bonds and Oaths for Peaceableness and Orderliness. (6.) The Oath of Inquisition, or *Super-inquirendis*. (7.) The abominable Test. (8.) The Oath of Abjuration." Now, concerning these Oaths, I own 'tis Matter of bitter Mourning, even to us at this Day, that ever such Conscience-debauching Oaths were imposed upon any in this Land; and being invented by the Bishops, and imposed through their Influence, some of whom formerly had pressed the Covenants with great Violence, as Peoples Duty, and a *Mode of the Covenant of Grace*, it was no Wonder this Practice turned many to Atheism and

and Profanity. 2. Tho' I am so far from justifying any of those Oaths, that I condemn them all, yet, tho' all the Author of *Plain Reasons* durst affirm aⁿent them had been true, it was no just Ground of Separation from the Church of *Scotland*: For he doth not say, the Bulk of Ministers and Elders had taken the most of those Oaths; No, this was to bare-fac'd a Falshood, that it seems he durst not assert it in positive Terms; he only says, *The Bulk of them had taken one or mo of them*. Now, tho' the Bulk of them had taken the *Bond of Peace*, which runs thus, "I A. B. do
 " bind and oblige me to keep the publick Peace, and if
 " I fail that I shall pay an Year's Rent; likewise, that my
 " Tenants and Men-servants shall keep the publick Peace,
 " and in case they fail, I oblige myself to pay for every
 " Tenant his Year's Rent, and for every Servant his Year's
 " Fee. And, for the more Security, I'm content thir Pre-
 " sents be registrate in the Books of Council." Now, tho' the Bulk of Ministers had taken this Oath, here had been no Ground for Separation; some honest People took it, and others refused it, upon different Views of its Extent and Meaning: " Yet, says Mr. *Wodrow*, for any Thing I
 " can learn, there followed no Alienation of Affections a-
 " mong Presbyterians, but the greatest Harmony was kept
 " up *." 3. Tho' I cannot pretend to tell what of these Oaths were taken by Ministers, and what not; yet, for any Thing I can learn, he might as well said, the Bulk of Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* had taken that Oath which was called the *Mark of the Beast*, whereby such in *France* as apostatized were obliged to renounce the Protestant Religion, as to name that abominable self-contradictory Oath, the *Test*, as an Oath which Presbyterian Ministers of this Church had taken. There are some other Things relating to the Persons constituting the Church of *Scotland* at the *Revolution*, which are complained of by Separatists; but, because I may have Occasion to touch these afterwards, I stay not here to mention them.

2. *Object*. The Church of *Scotland* at the *Revolution* changed her Constitution from what it was by Law established in 1649, and now, by Act of Parliament, her Government is settled on the Inclinations of the People, and only as established in 1592; which Settlement, say our Separatists, particularly *Plain Reasons*, P. 13. " was but an
 " infant State of the Church, far incomparable to her ad-
 " vanced

wanted State, between 1638 and 1649 *inclusive*. The Brethren also complain of the Parliament for this, in their 2d *Test.* p. 49. terming it (as *Plain Reasons* doth) a retrograde Motion. The former Objection respected the Members *Constituent* of the Church of *Scotland*, this respects her *Constitution* at the *Revolution*. Now, for Answer, 'Tis granted *Prelacy* was turned out by the Estates of Parliament 1689, as being *contrary to the Inclinations of the People*; yet not only for that, but also because it was a *Grievance*, and an *insupportable Grievance and Trouble to this Nation*, and that ever since the *Reformation*. And surely, as that worthy Servant of Christ, Principal *Foster*, says, in Answer to *Queries put to the Presbyterians in Scotland*, Pag. 187. " If our Parliament found it such an insupportable Grievance and Burden, it must needs be that they acknowledged it such, upon such solid Grounds of Reason and Law as are of a *standing Nature*. And in this Case the Inclination (besides that it is declared general since the Reformation, and this is supposed grounded upon the Gospel's reforming Light) is nothing else than what the Law of God, of Nature and Nations, the Love of true National and Christian Liberty prompts unto." And, 2. Such as make this Objection would know, that next Year, viz, June 7. 1690. our Parliament settled *Presbyterian Government* by a special *Act*, wherein, tho' the *Inclinations of the People* are mentioned as one Ground, yet not the only Ground, but other Grounds are mentioned for establishing of *Presbyterian Church-Government*, viz. " Its being agreeable to the Word of God, and most conducive to the Advancement of true Piety and Godliness, and establishing Peace and Tranquillity within this Realm." 3. Whereas 'tis complained of the Church of *Scotland*, That at the Revolution her Government was settled only as by *Act* of Parliament 1592, and not as in 1649. Answer, Seeing Separatists do not particularize wherein the one Settlement was inferior to the other, I shall not enquire into it; only, granting it might be inferior to it, yet neither this nor the former were *Acts* of the Church of *Scotland*, and therefore cannot be laid to her Charge. And, 4. As for the *Act* of Parliament 1592, securing the Privileges of this Church, it was reckoned a great Mercy to the Church of *Scotland* at that Time, and what she long desired. And grant this Settlement at the Revolution was inferior to that of 1649, it will not follow, because the State gives not all that is desired by the Church, or all that is her Due, therefore no

Favour is to be accepted. Because the Glory of the second Temple was inferior to that of the First, it was no Ground to separate from the Church of the *Jews*, nor yet to complain of the Priests, if they did all in their Power to have it equally glorious. And whereas Separatists, and particularly the Author of *Plain Reasons*, says, " The Settlement made in 1592. was made in an infant State of the Church, about 30 Years after her first Reformation from Popery, and before she had got the heavy Yoke of the King's Erastian Supremacy and Patronages shaken off." In this he fairly clashes with, and contradicts Mr. *Renwick* in his *Testimony*, who, in the Beginning thereof, speaking of the Church of *Scotland*, says, " Christ, by his glorious outstretched Arm, did emancipate and redeem his Inheritance from the Bondage of Antichrist, unto such a Pitch of Reformation in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, that it became a Pattern to other Churches, and had this Prerogative above them all, That at once, and from the Beginning, nothing was left unremoved or unreformed that ever flowed from the Man of Sin." And there he positively affirms, " That as every Part of the Reformation was regulated by the measuring Line of the Sanctuary, so, he says, it was established by *righteous and laudable Laws, ratifying the same*." Among which, I doubt not, he includes the Act of Parliament 1592. And as there he affirms, " Since Christ took Infeimment of *Scotland*, he hath maintained his Possession thereof by the Testimony of his Witnesses, against all Invasions thereupon;" so I can see no *Testimony* given by any against that Act of Settlement, tho' our Author, speaking of the *Revolution*, says, " The Church of *Scotland* hath been guilty of such a Step of Defection and Apostasy, by submitting to such a Settlement, as seems without a Parallel, either in sacred or profane History." And further, for all the great Noise Separatists make about that Act 1592, yet by the *National Covenant*, as People were sworn to stand by the King, in Defence of the Laws of the Kingdom, so that Law in particular is mentioned in that *Covenant*, and which some might think they were sworn to stand by. Our Author affirms sundry other Things in that *Reason*, but they are so weak, so frivolous, or evidently false, that I shall not spend Time in noticing them: Yet, 5. concerning that Act of Settlement, I cannot but further observe the Disingenuity of this Author of *Plain Reasons*, who having affirmed, P. 12. Pref-
bytery

bytery was settled at the Revolution *only as agreeable to the Inclinations of the People*, so he says, see the 5th Act of Parliament 1690. and P. 16. says, "By reading that Act of Parliament 1690, I find the Parliament exceeding cautious and careful to prevent every Body in Time coming from jealousing the Act, &c." Here, 1st, 'Tis false to say, the Parliament 1690 settled the Government of this Church *only as agreeable to the Inclinations of the People*; for, as was noticed above, they settled it as agreeable to the Word of God also. 2^{dly}, 'Tis false to say, that Parliament by this Act "was exceeding cautious and careful to prevent every Body in Time coming from jealousing any Act authorising and establishing our covenanted Work of Reformation in Whole or in Part, to be ratified, revived and restored by this Act, &c." For in that very Act, after telling Prelacy was abolished by the last Parliament, 'tis said, "Therefore his Majesty, with Advice and Consent of the said three Estates, do hereby revive, ratify and perpetually confirm all Laws, Statutes and Acts of Parliament made against Popery and Papists, and for the Maintenance and Preservation of the true reformed Protestant Religion, and for the true Church of Christ within this Kingdom, in so far as they confirm the same, or are made in favours thereof." Now, tho' I cannot pretend to be skilled in Law, yet, if the Acts establishing our *Covenanted Reformation* were Acts for *Maintenance and Preservation of the true Protestant Religion*, and Acts for *the true Church of Christ within this Kingdom*; then, I humbly think, by that very Act they were *revived, ratified and perpetually confirmed*. 3^{dly}, 'Tis an imposing upon People, when he says, *The Acts restoring the late Prelacy were not abolished absolutely and simpliciter, but with Limitations*; for the Parliament, in that Act cited by him, is speaking of other Acts as well as of those against Prelacy, when they declare, "They are rescinded, annulled and made void allenarly in as far as they are inconsistent with, or derogatory from, the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Government." Such as, the Act ratifying the Acts of that Prelatick Assembly 1610, in which there might be sundry good Acts which were not to be annulled absolutely, as there they are speaking of the Act intituled, *Anent Religion and the Test*, &c. and sundry other bad Acts, Laws, Statutes, Ordinances and Proclamations, which thereby that worthy Parliament rescinded. 4^{thly}, In citing the Words of that Act of Parliament,

he is guilty of perverting it, when he adds the Word *As* to that Act, when speaking of abolishing the Acts in favours of Prelacy, "Which Acts (says he) are abolished in so far alienarly as the said Acts and others are generally or particularly above-mentioned contrary or prejudicial to, inconsistent with, or derogatory from, the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Government, *As* now established." And then he adds his own Commentary, thus, *viz.* *On the Inclinations of the People*: Whereas that Act, speaking of such Acts in favours of Prelacy, &c. as were rescinded, says, "Alienarly as the said Acts are contrary to, or inconsistent with, or derogatory from, the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Government now established," and not *as* now established; tho' he adds the Word *As* to favour his false Allegation, to wit, That Presbytery was settled at the Revolution only on the Inclinations of the People. Authors who have such lax Consciences, that they can add or take away a Word or Words which alter the Meaning, as this Author doth, may make Parliaments, Assemblies or private Writers say as they please; nor can they be credited in their Affirmations, however positive they may be.

And further, sometimes the Church must be content with less than her Due, or with what she can have, as in 1643 when the *Solemn League and Covenant* was made; then, tho' the Church of Scotland was against all Sort of Prelacy, yet she behoved to be content with abjuring that Sort of Prelacy only which is contained in the *Parenthesis* of the second Article of that *Solemn League*, there being sundry in the *Westminster Assembly*, as Doctor *Twiss* their Prolocutor, Mr. *Gataker* and others, who would not abjure all Sort of *Episcopacy*, being for such a Scheme thereof as was proposed by Archbishop *Usher* *.

In relation to the Constitution of this Church, 'tis complained by Separatists, "That she appoints and authorizes, without Divine Warrant, a delegate Court which is no Court of Christ, called *The Commission of the General Assembly*, to whom they intrust the great and weighty Affairs of the Church, from whom there can be no Appeal to any other Court whatsoever; and which hath had many bad Effects, instance of old the *Publick Resolutions*, &c. †." Now, concerning this Court,

1. Commissions have been appointed and authorized by Councils or General Assemblies in former Ages, to put an

End

* *Neal's Hist.* Vol. 3. P. 72. † *Plain Reasons*, P. 131.

End to such Affairs as they could not overtake: Hence, about the Beginning of the 5th Century, we find an *African* General Assembly which met at *Carthage*, after spending much Time, some of the Brethren complaining of being so long from their Charges, that Assembly named Deputies from each Province for putting an End to what remained to be done; And the second Council of *Milevis* did the same, of which Commission *Augustine* was a Member.

2. Eminent Presbyterians have asserted the Commission is a Court of Christ: Hence that honest, zealous and faithful Commission which met in 1596, hearing King *James* had Thoughts of charging them to depart from *Edinburgh*, being for the most Part present with Advice of the Council of the Brethren, they concluded, "That, seeing they were conveyed by the Warrant of Christ and his Kirk, to see that it suffered no Detriment in so needful and dangerous a Time, they should obey God rather than Man; and, notwithstanding of any Charge, remain at his Work so long as it should be found expedient for the Well of the Kirk so to do ||." Now, it seems, those eminent Pastors, Mr. *Robert Rollock*, Mr. *James Melvil*, who with others were Members of that Commission, thought it was a Court of Christ, seeing 'tis affirmed by them, they were met by Warrant from him: And the learned Principal *Forrester*, in Answers to *Queries put to the Presbyterians in Scotland* *, says, "Commissions have the same Warrant with Synods and Assemblies." And *Rutherford*, in Preface to his *Lex Rex*, P. 13. says, "The Commissioners of General Assemblies—have the same Warrant of God's Word that Messengers of the Synod, *Acts* xv. 22, 27. hath."

3. The Church of *Scotland* hath had Commissions ever since the Reformation: Our first General Assembly, which met at *Edinburgh* 1560, appointed Commissioners to attend the Parliament, if any should be called, to present the Supplications of that Assembly to them †: The sixth General Assembly appointed a Commission to consider a Complaint tabled by the Superintendent of *Fife* against Mr. *George Leslie* Minister in *Strathmiglo*, and to decide therein. And that we had Commissions from the Reformation, appears in that the 29th Assembly, which met *March* 7th 1575, says, "Because the long Continuance of Commissioners might induce some Ambition and other Inconveniences, therefore this Assembly appointed that the Com-

"missioners

|| *Cald. Hist.* P. 340. *Pet. Cent.* 16. P. 521, * P. 177, 178. † *Pet. Hist. Cent.* 16. P. 222.

"missioners should be changed yearly ||." And the Assembly 1638 appointed Commissioners, whom they empowered and authorized to depose Ministers, and who actually deposed them; in which they were approved by the Assembly 1639, Sess. 19. And the General Assembly 1642, when going to appoint their Commission, affirms, "It hath been the laudible Custom of this Kirk, to appoint some Commissions in the *Interim* between Assemblies."

4. Whereas 'tis complained, That the Sentences of Commissions are irrevocable, there being no Appeal from them. I humbly think, tho' such as shall appeal from their Sentences upon insufficient Ground ought to be severely censured, yet, when their Sentences are evidently against the Word of God, our Constitution and Acts of Assembly, they ought to be rescinded by the Assembly; as was done in the Affair of *Kettle* in 1716, and of *Lochmaben* in 1724, and of *Auchtermuchty* in 1734, &c.

5. As to the Complaint of the *bad Effects of Commissions*, I grant, both before and since the Revolution, sometimes they have made bad Decisions; but so hath Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies: Yet this will not prove they are evil in themselves; and if sometimes they have done bad Things, so also at other Times they have been honoured of the Lord to do great and good Things for his Church, and have made a noble *Stand* against Encroachments: And tho' further Limitations may be needful, yet, if I mistake not, in no Time since the Reformation were Commissions more limited in their Instructions by our Assemblies than they have been since the Revolution; tho' I own 'tis to be lamented, that in sundry of their Determinations, particularly relating to the Settlement of Ministers, they cannot be justified.

And, to conclude this Objection, Whatever Clamour is raised by Separatists at this Day against our Constitution, I doubt not it was far from being a Hyperbole in the Reverend Mr. *Alexander Moncrieff* Minister at *Abernethy*, when, in his *Dissent* given in to the Synod of *Perth* met there *October* 1732, he gave our Constitution, both in Church and State, the Epithet of *Excellent*; and, if excellent then, it is so still: For since that Time there is no Alteration of it.

3dly, 'Tis objected, The Church of Scotland is *Erastian* in Principle and Practice, and therefore ought to be separated from: And the Civil Magistrate's calling and dissolving

ving Assemblies, and appointing Fasts and Thanksgivings, are instanced as clear Evidences of this *. Now, as to the Magistrate's calling and dissolving Assemblies, the Moderator, when the Business of our Assemblies is ended, by Consent of Members, dissolveth them, and names the Time of their next Meeting, in the Name of the Lord Jesus the sole Head and King of Zion. This indeed is done in Concert with his Majesty's Commissioner; and his After-speech doth not invalidate what the Moderator said: And is it not desirable when Church and State agree? And I know of none that ever denied it was lawful for the Civil Magistrate to call Assemblies, appointing Time and Place, if he take not a *privative* Power to himself in this Matter, or if he claim not this as his sole Prerogative, denying it to the Church of Christ when she may see it needful. See *Rutherford*, Preface to *Lex Rex*, p. 9. where he affirms this. And so much is own'd by the Church of *Scotland*, in her *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 31. Sect. 2. where 'tis said, "Magistrates may lawfully call a Synod of Ministers, and other fit Persons, to consult and advise about Matters of Religion." Our *Separatists*, particularly *Plain Reasons* †, cites the Act of Assembly 1647, in which, speaking of our *Confession of Faith*, 'tis said, "The Assembly understandeth some Parts of the second Article of the 31st Chap. only of Kirks not settled or constituted in Point of Government:" And so he would understand the second Article of that Chapter of our *Confession of Faith*, as if the Magistrate could only do this lawfully in a broken State of the Church; yet 'tis evident to a Demonstration, all the Assembly meant thereby was only, That in a constitute Church the Magistrate hath not a Power to call Assemblies, so as also to name the Members of those Assemblies, which he may do in a broken State of the Church (as the Parliament of *England* did call and nominate all the Members of the *Westminster* Assembly) for in that very Act of Assembly they affirm, "Tis always free to the Magistrate to advise with Synods of Ministers and Ruling Elders, meeting upon Delegation from the Churches, either ordinarily, or being indicted by his Authority occasionally and *pro re nata*." And the Words are so plain, that it would tempt some to think that Author could not but see this.

And the Assembly 1638, in their *Supplication* to the King, own they were met by the King's special Indiction, and that they had supplicated his Majesty to appoint that Assembly.

sembly, as they express the greatest Thankfulness to him for appointing thereof.

And whereas some make great Clamour against the Church of *Scotland* as being *Erastian*, because sometimes, as in 1692, when the Day was altered for the Assembly's Meeting, the Assembly submitted, and yet gave no Testimony against this Encroachment: Here I frankly own it was the Fault of the Civil Government, a Fault in his Majesty King *William*, that he by his Proclamation did alter the Time appointed for the meeting of our General Assembly. And further, I own it was his Fault, that by his Commissioner in 1692 he raised that Assembly: And also, I humbly think it was the Sin of the Church of *Scotland* she did not adhere to the Protest taken by Mr. *Grighton* her Moderator in that Assembly, against what was done in the King's Name by the Commissioner at that Time; yet this is no Ground of Separation at this Day. The Church of *Scotland* was thus guilty in what they reckon her best Times: For tho' the Assembly 1638, by their Act, Sess. 26. appointed their next Meeting to be upon the third *Wednesday* of *July* 1739, and appointed such as should not *acquiesce to their Acts* to be cited to that Time; yet the King altered the Day, and they did not meet till the 17th of *August* that Year; and we read of no Testimony given by the Church of *Scotland* against what was done in that Affair. Indeed that Assembly 1639 when met, in their *Supplication* to the King, they resent the great Dishonour done to God, the King, Kirk and whole Kingdom by that Book, called *the large Declaration*, which reflected upon the Church; but they never mentioned the altering of the Time for meeting of the Assembly: That Assembly knew that affirmative Precepts, tho' they bind *semper*, yet not *ad semper*. *The King may and ought to call Assemblies when he sees Necessity*, said that eminent Servant of Christ Mr. *Andrew Melvil*, yet that derogateth not from the Church's Power to call them ||. This no doubt he may do, whether the Church be in a broken State or not. And whereas 'tis said *, "This Church either cannot or will not sit one Hour as an Assembly, unless the King's Commissioner be present with them." That she cannot, is denied; tho' while the Civil Magistrate is friendly in countenancing General Assemblies, it would be the Height of Folly to sit without the King's Commissioner: Yet the Church of *Scotland* can sit, and readily would sit if she saw an absolute Necessity for this; as if she saw the Church

|| *Cald. Hist.* p. 177. * *Plain Reasons*.

Church of Christ would sustain more Harm by not sitting, than she could by meeting, sitting and acting in an Assembly. And for the *Erastianism* of the Civil Magistrate, in appointing Fasts and Thanksgivings, this may be answered more fully afterwards.

4thly, 'Tis objected, This Church inclines to Prelacy in Principle, and complies therewith in Practice. And the great Instances of this are, her receiving so many *Curates* into her Bosom at the *Revolution*, and then declaring expressly she would depose no Episcopal Incumbents simply for their Judgment anent the Government of the Church. And for these and such like Things, our Separatists say *, " If our worthy Reformers from 1638 to 1649 saw such a mungrel and prelatick Church, they could not own them to be the true Heirs and Successors to such a noble and glorious Cause, Work and Inheritance." And to the same Purpose speak the *Brethren* †. *Answer*. As to the first of these, namely, Her receiving some of the Episcopal Clergy at the Revolution, this will never prove the Charge, else the Assembly 1638 was Episcopal in Principle and Practice: For that Assembly consisted mainly of such as had subjected themselves to Prelacy, which was the settled Government of the Church from 1606 to that Time, and many of them had taken the abominable Oaths which were imposed in that Period; and then they neither professed Repentance for complying with Prelacy, nor professed Repentance for taking such Oaths, nor was any Confession required of them, tho' that Assembly declared these Oaths unlawful, and no way obligatory, because without Pretext of Warrant from the Kirk, and contrary to its antient laudible Constitutions. And, for ought I know, there might be twenty in that Assembly that had complied with Prelacy, for one such received by the Church of *Scotland* at the *Revolution*; and, instead of taking in some of those that had joined with Prelacy in that extol'd Period, every one of them was taken in: So that the *Brethrens* Clamour of the vast Difference between the Church of *Scotland* at the *Revolution*, and in the former reforming Times, in this Particular, seems to be a Noise raised to amuse the People, who must believe with implicate Faith in many Things of this Nature. And further, the receiving of some such then, at the urgent Desire of King and Parliament when they did apply, if free of Scandal or Error, and being such as could not be charged with supine Negligence or Insufficiency,

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* *Plain Reasons*, p. 39. † *P. 53. 2d Test.*

upon signing the *Confession of Faith* as the *Confession* of their Faith, owning and acknowledging *Presbyterian Government* to be the only Government of the Church of Scotland, and that they should submit unto it, and never do any Thing directly nor indirectly which might tend to the Prejudice or Subversion thereof; This was no Evidence of her inclining to Prelacy: And it was upon these Terms only any of the Episcopal Incumbents were received.

But then, as to the other Instance adduced for Proof of this, that the Church of Scotland inclines to Prelacy, namely, That she declared at the Revolution she would not depose any Episcopal Incumbent simply for their Judgment anent the Government of the Church. For Answer, I might say, it cannot be proven this was determined by the General Assembly in 1690, all the Proof being these few Words in the Index to the unprinted Acts of that Assembly, namely, "Declaration by the Moderator, that this Assembly would
 " depose no Incumbents simply for their Judgment anent
 " the Government of the Church, nor urge Re-ordination
 " upon them, *Seff. 6th.*" And our Brethren, p. 53. second *Testimony*, give their charitable Commentary upon these Words thus, "That is, they declare that the perfidious
 " Prelates and their Underlings were not to be deposed
 " for their treacherous Defection from the covenanted
 " Principles of this Church." As if that one Principle simply, of a Man's being for Prelacy, was enough to depose him from the Ministry, tho' as holy as *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, *Hooper*, *Hall*, *Usher*, or Doctor *Twiss* the Prolocutor or Moderator to the *Westminster* Assembly, and many other Ministers Members thereof, who refused to abjure all Kind of Prelacy. A Moderator might declare as above, tho' there had been no small Opposition made unto it by the Assembly, and while perhaps the major Part was against it, tho' they might see meet to let it pass at that Time; or it might be the Moderator's Mind this was Fact, when yet he laboured under a Mistake. But grant it was Fact (tho' I look on Prelacy, or Episcopal Government, to be unscriptural, yea, to be antiscritptural) yet, if this was the Fault of the General Assembly in 1690, I humbly think the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland hath been of this same Mind in 1638: For tho' she deposed and also excommunicated some of the Diocesan Bishops for heinous Offences and Enormities proven against them, and deposed others for gross Transgressions laid to their Charge, yet they only suspended *Lindsay* Bishop of *Dunkeld* from the

ministerial Function, declaring, That if he should acknowledge that Assembly, reverence the Constitutions thereof, and obey his Sentence, and make Repentance according to the Order prescribed, he was to be continued in the Ministry of *St. Madoze*. So also they did in the Case of *Aber-nethy* Bishop of *Gaitbness*, there being no Immoralities laid to their Charge, tho' with the other Bishops they were charged by that Assembly, and it was found evident they had broken the Cautions agreed upon by the Assembly at *Montrose* anent voting in Parliament, and that they had received Consecration to the Office of Episcopacy, and had oppressed the Kirk with Novations in the Worship of God; Yet, for all these, that Assembly did not think it their Duty to depose them from the Function of the Ministry, as may be seen in the Acts of that Assembly, *sess. 14*. So the Brethren in their *Testimony*, p. 18. and again p. 57. asserting that all the Prelates were deposed from the Ministry, they assert a Thing which is not Matter of Fact. The Assembly 1638 deposed neither Bishop nor any else for being of prelatick Principles: And why the Bishops were deposed, may be further seen in the Preface to *Rutherford's Lex Rex*.

Some Separatists speak * of all the Hundreds of Tested and Untested Curates which have been welcomed into the Bosom of the Revolution-Church, as if there had been a great many Hundreds of such. For Answer, 'Tis denied that any Hundreds of Curates, whether tested or untested, were received into the Bosom of this Church, tho' many of them were continued in their Charges by the Civil Magistrate, which she could not help; and for such of them as had taken the *Test*, I suppose few of them ever applied to be received, far less Hundreds of them: And whatever can be said against their having received any such, the same may be said against the Assembly 1638. for receiving any who had taken the greater and lesser Oaths under *Prelacy*, in which greater Oath they swear, "To be leal and true to the King's Majesty, and his Highness's Successors, and, to the outmost of their Power, to maintain his Highness's Right and Prerogative in Causes Ecclesiastical; and that they should be obedient to their Ordinary the Archbishop, and to all others their Superiors in the Church; and that they maintain the present Government of the Church and Jurisdiction Episcopal; and that they should live peaceable Ministers in the Church, subjecting themselves to

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“ the Orders that therein were, or should be established.” Which was a swearing to *blind Obedience* with a Witness. And by that Oath which was called the *lesser Oath*, which was also taken by Intrants to the Ministry, they swore, “ To be obedient to all the Acts and Constitutions of the Church, and particularly to the Acts concluded at Perth 1618.” And as the former Oath was concluded with Swearing, they were “ content to be deprived of their Ministry, and to be reputed and held infamous and perjured Persons for ever, if they should contraveen;” so this *lesser Oath* concluded with these Words, “ And if I shall fail in the Performance of this my Oath and Promise, I’m content, that upon Trial thereof I be deposed as perjured, and unworthy to bear any Function in the Church *.” And I suppose the Ministers of that Assembly 1638. for a great Part were Men who had sworn and come under these Oaths, which, in my Opinion, were far more hainous Evils than any Thing could be laid to the Charge of such as were Members of our Assembly 1690. Some Separatists ask, “ If any Instance can be given of the Revolution-Church her deposing one Curate merely for his being Episcopal in his Judgment?” And I ask, If one such Instance can be given of the Church of Scotland, from 1638 to 1649 *inclusive*, or in any former Time? I see not that ever the Church of Scotland, in that Period, required it of such Ministers as had been under Prelacy, they should so much as profess their Sorrow for that Sin. Some cite the Act of Assembly 1639. *anent receiving deposed Ministers*, as if that Assembly had required this; but there is not one Word in all that Act to this Purpose, tho’ such as they received were to profess their Repentance for subscribing the *Declinature*, and for reading the *Service-Book*.

There are sundry other Falshoods relating to this Point advanced by him, as, That they who were sent up to address Queen and Parliament against the *Patronage-Act* 1712, in addressing the *House of Lords*, they gave them their common Titles of *Lords Spiritual and Temporal*; and that this was done in the Name and by the Appointment of the Commission of the Assembly: For neither that Commission, nor any other, ever made such an Appointment. But I insist not upon this. And the Church of Scotland, since the Revolution is so far from being of *Prelatick Principles*, that the General Assembly 1701, Act 14. did enact and ordain, “ That

“ That any who should receive either Licence or Ordination from any of the late Prelates, or any others not allowed by the Authority of this Church, should be incapable of ministerial Communion for the Space of three Years *simpliciter*, and even after that Time, ay and while the Presbytery to which he should apply was satisfied concerning his Repentance.” But no such Repentance was prescribed by any Assembly from 1638 to 1650.

5th *Object*. This Church is most tyrannical in her Government, therefore, &c. I might pass this Objection, having answered to it already, Chap. 4. when speaking of the *Causes of Separation*; yet, whereas 'tis given as an Instance of her *Tyranny*, that she has cast out the *Four Brethren* from her Communion, which, say some, is sufficient Ground of Separation, I shall insist some further upon it. And as I always did, so still I condemn that Sentence; but, as I said, one *Act*, or sundry *Acts* of Oppression or Cruelty will not make a *Tyrant*, nor be sufficient Ground of Separation from a Church; and their Ejection could scarcely be reckoned the Deed of the Church of *Scotland*, considering what hath been said anent this Sentence already. But further, granting it was a most tyrannical Sentence, yet that is no Ground of Separation, else there was the justest Ground to separate from the Church of *Scotland* in those Times, which all our Separatists cry up and extol so highly. The General Assembly 1638, as noticed before, by their *Act*, of the Date *December 17*. “ Constitutes and ordains, That from henceforth no sort of Person, of whatsoever Quality or Degree, be permitted to speak or write against the said Confession, this Assembly, or any *Act* of this Assembly, and that under the Pain of incurring the Censures of this Kirk.” Now, some might think this was an *Act* of the greatest Tyranny, and a plain restricting of *Ministerial Freedom*, to discharge any Minister or Preacher to speak one Word against that Assembly, or any *Act* thereof, under the Pain of Censure; and the Censure might be, not barely an *Admonition* or a *Rebuke*, but Suspension, Deposition, yea Excommunication, if they refused to confess their Fault in speaking or writing against any *Act* of that Assembly; and some tender, serious Ministers might think themselves obliged in Conscience to speak, preach, and testify even against this very *Act* itself, as restricting *Ministerial Freedom*. And they might speak against that *Act* which condemned these Assemblies at

Aberdeen and *St. Andrews*, partly upon such a Ground as that the *Burghs* could not be present at those Assemblies. Or, what if they should thought it Duty to testify against that *Act*, *December 5* Sess. 15. which condemned the unlawful Oaths of *Intrants* in Time of Prelacy, because without any Pretext or Warrant from the Kirk, &c. without ever mentioning their being contrary to the Word of God; so also because, when they condemned the *Service-book*, the *Book of Canons* and *Higb Commission*, they condemn them upon such like Grounds, but never mention their being contrary to the Word of God? Or, what if they should thought it Duty to testify against them for that Expression in their Sentence against Archbishop *Spotswood* and others, where they say, Declining and protesting against the Assembly, is by the Acts of this Assembly censurable with summary Excommunication? Or, what if they should thought it Duty to speak against that Assembly, for showing so much Lenity to the Bishops of *Dunkeld* and *Gairbness*, as only to suspend them from the Ministry, when it may be thought they deserved Deposition, on Account of what was found evident against them? Or, what if some should said, the Sentence of that Assembly against the Minister of *Tremont* seemed somewhat sharp, in that he was suspended for baptizing a Child in a private House? Or, what if they should thought that Sentence somewhat severe, which enjoined such Ministers to be excommunicate, as, being deposed by that Assembly, did not acquiesce in their Sentence, or if they should exercise any Part of their ministerial Function, which was enacted Sess. 14th? Or, what if some should thought it a Fault to thank his Majesty for indicting or calling that Assembly, terming it a *Royal Favour*, when they had all Right by their intrinsic Power to meet of themselves? Or, what if they should thought it Duty to testify against these Expressions in their Supplication to the King's Majesty, in which *James VI.* his Majesty's Father, is termed a King of happy Memory, and a King of everlastig Memory, being apprehensive this looked too like Flattery, considering what an Enemy he had been to the Church of Christ in *Scotland*? Will not an Act of that Nature be owned by all to be a most tyrannical Act?

Again, I cannot see how any can vindicate our Assemblies in that Period from a great deal of Tyranny, in that they enjoined the Prosecution of all such, whether Papists or others, as did not communicate with the Church of *Scotland* according to Act of Parliament made thereupon, as did

did the Assembly 1642, and again the Assembly 1644: This, say some, was too like the *English Sacramental Test*, tending highly to the Profanation of that holy Ordinance; and many think there wanted not a great deal of Tyranny in that Act of Assembly 1647, which obliged every Member in every Congregation thro' Scotland to keep their own Parish-kirk, and to communicate there in the Word and Sacrament. And further, to me it looked like an Act of the greatest Spiritual Tyranny in the General Assembly 1648, to ordain, That all young Students at their first Entry to the College, and all Persons whatsoever (which surely included every Lad and Lass) should take the Covenant at their first receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Again, I find sundry think the Act of Assembly 1648, anent deposed or suspended Ministers, is an Act of the same Nature, in regard that Act ordains, "That whosoever, after the Sentence of Deposition pronounced against them, do either exercise any Part of their ministerial Calling in the Places they formerly served in, or do possess, meddle or intromit with the Stipends or other Benefits whatsoever belonging to these Kirks they served, they shall be proceeded against with Excommunication: And, if any suspended Minister, during his Suspension, either exercise any Part of their ministerial Calling, or intromit with the Stipend, that he be deposed; and, after Deposition continuing in any of those Faults, that he be processed with Excommunication." What more severe, than to depose a Minister of the Gospel, and also excommunicate him, if, after Suspension and Deposition, he should intromit with his Stipend? And it can scarcely be thought, that Act is intended only of submitting to such Sentences as are just in themselves, and in our Esteem; else all Sentences of Church-judicatories might be elided or rendered in vain by Persons censured, their saying, they looked upon such Sentences to be unjust or unwarrantable, and therefore could not submit unto them. And that the Assembly meant their Act anent Submission to all Sentences, even albeit the Sentence should be unjust, seems evident from the Decision of the General Assembly 1646, Sess. 5. in the Case of Mr. James Morison and the Presbytery of Kirkwall: The which Assembly declared Mr. Morison censurable for not submitting, but going on to preach, notwithstanding of an unjust Sentence; and accordingly rebuked him, and ordered him to profess his Repentance for Non-submission before the Presbytery of Kirkwall which had

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suspended him unjustly, and declared he was not to be received as a Minister or Brother by the Presbytery of *Kirk-wall*, until he confessed his Fault before them in not submitting to their Sentence; tho', at the same Time, they declared the Presbytery deserved a Rebuke for suspending Mr. *Morison* unjustly.

Sundry other such Acts might be mentioned in those Times, which now I stay not to enumerate, but shall conclude this Particular with the Words of the famous Mr. *Rutherford*, in his dying *Testimony to the Work of Reformation*, in which, speaking of the Times from 1638 to 1649, says, " In our Assemblies we were more to set up a State
" opposite to a State, more upon Forms, Citations, leading
" of Witnesses, Suspensions from Benefices, than spiritual-
" ly to perswade and work upon the Conscience, with the
" Meekness and Gentleness of Christ; the Glory and Roy-
" alty of our princely Redeemer and King, was trampled
" on, as any might have seen in our Assemblies. What
" way the Army and the Sword, and the Countenance of
" Nobles and Officers seem'd to sway, that Way were the
" Censures carried: It had been better had there been mo
" Days of Humiliation and Fastings in Assemblies, Synods,
" Presbyteries, Congregations, Families, and far less ad-
" journings Commissions, new peremptory Summonses, and
" new drawn-up Processes, and if the Meekness and Gen-
" tleness of our Master had got so much Place in our Hearts,
" that we might have waited on Gainfayers and Parties
" contrary-minded, and we might have driven gently, as
" our Master Christ who loves not to overdrive, but *car-*
" *ries the Lambs in his Bosom.*" These Words shew the
Judicatories of the Church in that Period were as guilty in
their Decisions as any Thing that can be alledged against
the Church of *Scotland* at this Day: And perhaps as many,
if not mo Acts were made in these twelve Years, which
our Separatists would call tyrannical in the Church of *Scot-*
land at this Day, than in all the Forty seven or Forty eight
Years since the happy Revolution.

6th Object. The Church of *Scotland* hath gone in unto and
approved of the *incorporating Union* with *England*, by which
abjured Prelacy is to remain the Government of that Church,
which is a going contrary to our solemn Engagements to en-
deavour the Reformation of that Kingdom; and therefore,
&c. Now, concerning the *Union*, I have always thought
it a Fault in our Parliament that ever they consented so far
as they did to the Security of the Worship, Discipline and
Government

Government of the Church of *England*, even albeit there had never been any Engagements upon this Land to endeavour the Reformation of that Kingdom: For to me it appears unlawful to consent my Neighbour shall do an ill Thing. But, 2dly, Whatever Fault was in this, it can never be laid to the Charge of the Church of *Scotland*, considering how the *Commission* of the General Assembly, which sat and represented her at that Time, did address the Parliament against going in to such an Union: And, in their Address, they testified against the subjecting this Nation to a *British* Parliament, whereof Twenty six Prelates are constituent Members and Legislators; declaring also in their Address, "That it is contrary to our known Principles and *Covenants*, that any Churchman should bear Civil Offices, or have Power in the Commonwealth: Craving, in another Address, That there might be no — Stipulation or Consent for the establishing of the Hierarchy and Ceremonies, as they would not involve themselves and the Nation in Guilt, and as they would consult the Peace and Quiet of this Nation, both in Church and State." And the Brethren, in their *Testimony*, p. 55. give witness to this; and this "they did in Face of strong and keen Opposition: For a great Number of Ruling Elders, Noblemen and Gentlemen, Members of Commission, protested against the Commission for so doing." And as all their three Addresses were presented before the Union was concluded, so they were honest Testimonies for Presbyterian Government and our Covenants, and against Prelacy; and what this *Commission* did was approved, and that unanimously, by the ensuing General Assembly 1707, which did commend and thank that Commission for their great Zeal, Faithfulness and Diligence in their Proceedings.

Tho' the Brethren could not deny the Church of *Scotland* by her Commission did declare against the Union, yet, in their *Act* and *Testimony*, p. 55. they affirm, "That Assembly only approved of the Proceedings of the Commission in common Form, without any express Approbation of their Conduct in this Particular, tho', say they, Matters of less Moment have sometimes been particularly noticed." But in this our Brethren are far mistaken, asserting two or three Things which are not Matter of Fact: For, as the Assembly unanimously ratified and approved of that Commission's Actings and Proceedings, so they commend and thank them for the great Zeal, — Faithfulness

fulness and Diligence they had evidenced in their Proceedings. Now, in giving their *Zeal* and *Faithfulness* the Epithet of GREAT; this was out of the common Form, and more than any of our Assemblies used to do in approving their Commissions. 2. As thus it was out of the common Form, so surely it was out of the common Course that the Assembly 1707 ratified and approved that Commission, so as to make an approbatory Act to this Purpose, and record it among their printed Acts that Year; which shewed there was a very great Inclination in that Assembly to approve of what the former Commission had done, in regard this Act was a going contrary to an express Act of the immediately preceeding Assembly, *viz.* the *Eighth* thereof, in which the Assembly 1706 appointed and ordained, "That in all Time coming the same *Formula* be observed in the Approbation of the Registers of the Actings and Proceedings of the Commissions of the Assemblies that is prescribed by the Acts of the Assembly to be observed in the Attestation of the Synod-books."

3. Whereas 'tis said, That sometimes Matters of less Moment have been particularly noticed; surely they mean by our Assemblies in approving of Commissions. But this is another Mistake: For, in approving the Commission in all our Acts since the Revolution, the Assembly hath never noticed any Affairs in particular; and in all our old Acts, from 1638 to 1650, there is but one Instance of any Particular thus noticed, and that was in 1648, where, approving the Commission 1647, that Assembly particularly ratified and approved of the Commission's Papers relating to the Engagement, and their Judgment of the Unlawfulness thereof. And for as momentuous an Affair the *Solemn Acknowledgment of publick Sins and Engagement to Duty*, drawn up by the Commission of the Assembly 1648, was; yet the Assembly 1649, in approving that Commission, never took the least Notice of it.

Our Author of *Plain Reasons*, p. 59. asserts sundry gross Falshoods relating to this *Union*; as, 1st, 'Tis a notorious Falshood when he says, "The Commission in their Address mentioned not the *Topicks* whence the strongest Arguments might been drawn against it, *viz.* our *Covenants*:" For, as hath been shown above, they mentioned them expressly. 2^{dly}, 'Tis a Falshood when he says, "The Commission withdrew their Representations which they had presented unto the Parliament concerning the *Union*, after they had obtained what he calls their

"*Windle*."

"*Windle-straw Act of Security.*" And no doubt our Author or Authors brings strong Proof for this: Well, what is it? For, says he, *they had never Honesty nor Faithfulness to protest against it.* A strange Inference! 3dly, Whereas he says, "That Deed of the Commission was amply approved, and they praised them for it." This is another Falshood and Slander. They had them not to thank for this, because it was never done, tho' they thanked them for *their great Zeal and Faithfulness* in addressing against it as they did.

Our Separatists, as particularly the foresaid Author, p. 62. says, "No Body, except thro' Ignorance, has the least Ground to deny that this present Church did go into and approve the Union-Establishment, seeing the contrary is so evident from their Addresses, Representations, &c. insert in their publick Records." All his Proof is this, The Church of Scotland, in her *Addresses and Representations*, hath pleaded for the Security of her Privileges from the *Act of Security* granted at the *Union*. But, seeing he speaks of Ignorance, I might tell him, it seems not to be for want of Ignorance, or something worse, that he argues thus. If a Robber at taking my Money should engage to give me a Part again, might not I mind him of his Obligation without approving his unjust Action? I suppose the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* was far from approving the Union, when, in his *Essay upon the Abjuration*, p. 30. in Answer to the Objection of such as said the Government of the Church was precarious unless that Oath was taken, he said, "I cannot see how this Piece of Policy will hold, seeing the Government of our Church as *Presbyterian* is established by a fundamental Article of the Treaty of Union, &c. And, by the same Article of the Treaty, we are *exceeded from all Oaths inconsistent with our Principles, &c.*"

And so the above-mentioned Author of the Church of Scotland's *Grievances* was far from approving the Union, when, in arguing against the Toleration, he expresses himself thus, p. 12. "I say, It is an Infringement of the Church's Liberties. Can any Thing be a greater Encroachment upon her Privileges than, contrary to the express Articles of the Union, to grant a boundless Toleration." And even our ingenious Author of *Plain Reasons* himself, p. 75. when speaking against the Toleration, he argues to the same Purpose. A conquered People takes what Privileges or Advantages they can have from the Conqueror,

and, in case they be in Danger of being robbed of these, they will plead the Conqueror's Engagement to preserve them; But will that infer they approve of the Conquest? " Our Separatists, says Mr. *Hog*, are not so simple and stupid, but that without Scruple they take all the Protections and Emoluments they can have by the incorporating Union; and many of them pay Cess for supporting the Government: Yet they would justly think themselves injured should we from thence conclude that they approved it." Some again, as the same Author of *Plain Reasons*, p. 63. says, " Not a few of the Ministers of this Church got Money to lend them a Lift to this woful Union." What Truth there may be in this I know not; but, till he prove it better than by *Carnwath's Memoirs*, considering how opposite he was to the Church of Scotland, the Truth of it will be questioned by sundry: But, grant there had been a *Judas* among every twelve Ministers in Scotland, which might amount to between Seventy or Eighty, that will not prove this was the Deed of the Church of Scotland, nor that she should be separated from on that account. But, without insisting further upon this, I conclude with the Words of Mr. *Hog*, when speaking upon this Subject*, who says, " The Church gave an honest Testimony against the Union, and such as challengeth the more tender Regard, for that the contrary Tides at that Time were exceedingly strong; And what tho' there had been a general Faintishness and Failure of Spirit as to that Matter in the Hour of Temptation, must therefore the whole Church be cast of, and another reared up in Opposition to it?"

7th Object. This Church is of *Toleration-principles*; and therefore is not to be joined with. The great Argument for Proof is, That in 1712 there was an almost boundless Toleration granted by Queen *Anne* and her Parliament. But this Objection is so frivolous, I will not spend Time in Answer to it; nor can any think it necessary, considering how notour and evident 'tis to all, that, at the Time when this Affair was in Dependence before the Parliament, the Church of Scotland used all her Endeavours to have it prevented, by sending up Commissioners to address Queen and Parliament against it. Tho' I own 'tis just Ground of Mourning and Lamentation that ever such a boundless Toleration was granted, yet I'm far from approving of Persecution purely for Conscience Sake: Only I cannot but

notice,

* *Letters*, p. 46.

notice, that for as bad an Act it is, yet our ingenious Author of *Plain Reasons* affirms a Falshood to make it worse; when he says, p. 66. "All Sects and Sorts of Persons, under what Mold or Shape soever, *Antitrinitarians* some way excepted, have, by this Toleration-act, a full and ample Pass." For that Act expressly excludes all Papists from the Benefit thereof, as much as *Antitrinitarians*.

8th Object. The Church of Scotland hath taken the unlimited Oath of Allegiance; which, say Separatists, is a sinful Oath, *Plain Reasons*, p. 78. in regard, 1st, 'Tis unlimited, wanting these Restrictions or Limitations which are in our Covenants, namely, the preserving the King's Majesty, his Person and Authority, in the Preservation and Defence of the true Religion, and Liberties of the Kingdom. And 2dly, 'Tis a sinful Oath, in regard 'tis imposed in Place of all other Oaths which might be required by Law, whereby the Covenants are excluded. Now, for Answer to the first of these, The Oath of Allegiance being to a King, who, by his Coronation-oath, hath solemnly sworn to defend us in our Religion and Liberties both Civil and Ecclesiastick, 'tis evident that our Oath of Allegiance is no more unlimited to him, than his Coronation-oath is unlimited to us. And, was this a Fault thus to swear, then it might be objected against our National Covenants upon the same Ground, namely, That they are not sufficiently limited, in regard, tho' by them we be obliged to defend the King's Person and Authority, only in Defence of our Religion and Liberties; yet these Oaths are not limited, as they ought to be, with respect to the Means which may be sinful, when the Thing urged may be good and lawful. As for Instance, if the King should make an Act to behead, hang, burn, or but to banish every Person that scrupled to swear the Covenants, or that should have the least Scruple anent any Expression in our old Confession of Faith, or second Book of Discipline, to which all own we are sworn by these Covenants; or, what if a Part of the Nation had declared they could not approve of, nor submit unto, Presbyterian Government, and the King had commanded them to be put to the Sword; This was to appear in Defence of our Religion; but the Means had been sinful. And further, as to the Unlimitedness of this Oath, that National Covenant might been objected against upon as good Grounds, in regard by it we are sworn, to the utmost of our Power, with our Means and Lives, to stand to the Defence of our dread Sovereign the King's Majesty, his Person and Authority,

city, in Defence of our Religion, Liberties and Laws of the Kingdom; where we are sworn to defend *the Laws* of the Kingdom, without mentioning good or bad Laws, or Laws that had been or should be made. And 'tis known some Laws or Acts are cited in that same Covenant, which are much exclaimed against by Separatists at this Day; as the 114 Act of the 12th Parliament of *James VI.* made in 1592; by which *Act*, says *Plain Reason*, p. 13. "The Church is considerably restricted in her Power of convocating and dissolving her Assemblies, and Admission of Ministers into Parishes."

2dly, Whereas 'tis said, The Oath of Allegiance was imposed by the *Claim of Right*, in Place of all other Oaths which might be required by Law, and so seems to exclude the Covenants. The *Bretbren* also in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 50. assert the Parliament which met immediately after the Revolution, appointed the Oath of Allegiance to be sworn, "in Place of any other Oaths imposed by Laws and Acts of preceeding Parliaments;" *Affirming*, "The Terms in which that Act is conceived, appear plainly to exclude the Oath of the Covenant, which contained a very solemn Test of Allegiance to the Sovereign." Now, concerning their Affirmations, here I observe, 1st, Tho' they say that Parliament appointed as above, yet they never tell which of all the nine Sessions of that Parliament it was which appointed this, nor do they signify in what Chapter of these Acts 'tis to be found. Are such as adhere to the Testimony to believe with implicate Faith? 2dly, Whereas they cite the Words above-narrated with inverted *Commas*, as if they were the very Words of that Parliament; yet there are no such Words to be found in any of the Acts of all the nine Sessions thereof. But, 3dly, Whereas the Act intended, I doubt not, is the second Act of the second Session of King *William's* and Queen *Mary's* first Parliament; yet in all that Act there is not a Word from which any such Inference can be justly drawn as this, That the Parliament intended thereby to exclude the Oath of the Covenant, or to deny its Obligation: And all the Words from which they can pretend the least Shadow of Ground for their Assertion, are only these in the Close of the Act, where, after imposing the Allegiance upon all Members and Clerks of Parliament, &c. 'tis said, "And do hereby retreat and rescind all preceeding Laws and Acts of Parliament, in so far as they impose any other Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, Declarations and Tests,"

"excepting the Oath *De Fidei*." Now, that the Covenant could never be in the View of that Parliament, is evident, not only from this, that many Members thereof were Favourers of the Covenant; but also from this, that to have rescinded the Covenant, was to have rescinded that which was not in Force, I mean by the Civil Laws of the Land: For the Covenants had been rescinded in the preceeding Reign, as is shown at more Length afterwards, when speaking of rescinding the *Act Rescissory*, in answer to the 13th Objection. So by *Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy, Declarations and Tests*, the sinful Oaths which had been in the former Period, and which were still in Force by Law, were undoubtedly the Oaths intended by that worthy Parliament. If the Brethren take such Liberty of altering and changing the Words of Acts of Parliament, they may make them speak what they never intended. The Words of the Commission in their *Seasonable Admonition*, published 1698, p. 22. are of Weight here; "We are confident (say they) the Covenant was not in the Mind of those who made that Act when they made it, nor can the Words bear any such Sense, but that this should be instead of other Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy*, or which were imposed under the late Government, which should commend it; and is it not a pitiful and shameful Thing that it should be stumbled at?" And further, tho' the *Acts* against the Covenants were bad *Acts*, yet I may be allowed to say there was no Law at that Time when our *Claim of Right* was formed, or when this *Act* was made, for imposing the Covenants; and so they could not be imposed by Law, till a new Law was made: And therefore the Covenants could not be in the View of these *Patriots* at that Time when the Oath of *Allegiance* was imposed in Place of all Oaths which might be required by Law. Surely as no Man's Words are to be tortured to a bad Sense, so far less are the Words of the Representatives of a Nation; and to take in the *Abjuration* affirming, as do the Brethren in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 59, that the said Oath, together with the Oath of *Allegiance*, is substitute in Room of our solemn Covenants, is a Mistake: The Imposers of the *Abjuration* never gave Ground for any to think so.

9th Object. Ministers have been hainously guilty in swearing the *Abjuration*, whereby they have homologated and sworn to the *united Constitution*; which is contrary to our Covenants, *National* and *Solemn League*. Now, concerning this Oath, because many *separatists* make a hideous

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Claimour against it, as if alone it were sufficient Ground of Separation from all the Ministers of this Church; not only from them that have taken it, but also from others for joining with them in Judicatories and at Sacraments; therefore I shall insist upon it at some more Length, and, without entring upon any Debate as to the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of this Oath, concerning it I lay down some Propositions:

As 1st, There have been very different Sentiments and Practices anent it among godly and learned Men: For as some worthy tender Persons, who are known to be cordial Friends to a Revolution-interest, have never taken that Oath; so others, no less worthy and tender, as the Reverend Mr. *William Stewart* Minister of the Gospel at *Kiltearn*, who took it in its first, and the Reverend Mr. *William Moncrieff* at *Largo*, who took it in the last Form. Of the Lawfulness of which last Form, also the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* was so much convinced, that he gave it under his Hand to the Laird of *Naughtoun*, Sheriff-depute of *Fife*, that he had Clearness to take it, and should take it when required, tho' there was something peculiar in his Circumstances, so as he would not take it that Day on which it was taken by other Ministers of his Presbytery. This is no Secret; for his Obligation to take it was real openly in the Synod of *Fife*.

2^{dly}, As there have been different Sentiments and Practices among Christ's Servants anent this Oath, so, as says *Golforgie* in his *Grievances of the Church of Scotland considered*, P. 3. "The embracing or refusing the Oath of Abjuration, affords not the least Ground for Separation. This Proposition, *adds he*, shines with such a bright and convincing Light of Truth, that none who can allow themselves, without Prejudice, to reflect upon its Evidence, will refuse to admit of it as undeniable." And, among other Things adduced to clear that Proposition, he says, "When I find our blessed Saviour injoining his Disciples both to hear and do what the *Pharisees*, who sat in *Moses* his Chair, said unto them, notwithstanding that, according to our Lord's Character of them, their Works were diametrically opposite to their Doctrine; I cannot help thinking it both new and odd Divinity, that, upon my Pastor's differing from me in a disputable Point, I'm no more obliged to receive the Eucharist from his Hands, or the Law from his Lips." And hence says he, "The

The Laity, who merely upon this Account entertain
"uncho"

" uncharitable Thoughts of their Ministers, and, as a Con-
 " sequence of this unallowable Way of thinking, refuse
 " to concur with their lawful Pastors in the Participation
 " of all the Ordinances of Christ, are highly culpable, be-
 " ing Disturbers of the Church's Peace, and Violaters of
 " her Unity." And if any have Impressions, adds he,
 that it is a Sin to concur in divine Worship with such Mi-
 nisters, viz. such as have taken the Abjuration Oath, cer-
 tainly *Satan is the Author of such Impressions*. And, when
 prescribing Remedies against Division upon the Head of
 the *Abjuration*, he speaks excellently, saying, P. 5. " In
 " order to engage us to this Charity, which would issue
 " in an Unity of Measures, let us consider what melanchol-
 " ly Consequences may ensue upon our Divisions, if they
 " be not happily removed. 'Tis notour, they have been
 " fatal to all Societies, have tumbled down flourishing
 " Monarchies, and laid magnificent Cities into Ashes; they
 " have rent Churches into Pieces, and knocked Religion
 " on the Head. 2. The Enemies of our Zion, whose Pro-
 " jects have been baffled of Heaven, and their Counsels
 " infatuate of God, will have this Piece of Satisfaction left
 " them, to rejoice when they see us disagree among our-
 " selves, and be pleased with the agreeable Thoughts, that
 " we are about to accomplish ourselves what they design'd
 " for us." And there he hath much more to that Pur-
 pose published in 1716. 3. To say, by taking that Oath
 Ministers have sworn to the *Union* and *united Constitution*,
 abjured the Covenants, approven of Bishops their sitting
 in Parliament, and the like, when there is not a Word in
 that Oath to any such Purpose, is surely unfair, these being
 strained Consequences, refused by them who have taken
 the Abjuration. The Reverend Mr. *James Hog*, tho' he
 never had Freedom to take the Oath of *Allegiance* nor *Ab-
 juration*, yet was far from being of their Mind who argue
 at this Rate. Hence in his Letters, when speaking of such
 Ministers as had taken the Abjuration in its first Form, says,
 P. 55. " Tho' I differ from my Reverend Brethren who
 " have taken the Oaths, yet I look upon myself as obliged
 " to receive their Testimony concerning the Principles they
 " adhere to; and few of them I know do approve the
 " incorporating Union, and far less do any of them ap-
 " prove *Erastian* Prelacy, Supremacy, and the *English* Po-
 " pish Ceremonies. I owe them the Charity or Justice, to
 " believe that they sincerely disown these Evils. — Touch-
 " ing

ing Strainings for extracting Perjury, Scandal, Error, He-
 rely, and other such abominable Crimes, from the different
 Sentiments and Practices of Ministers, who otherwise
 are one in Principle; such Measures, I say, tend natively
 to confound all Christian Societies, and are, amongst the
 Inventions of Satan, mostly reserved till these last and
 perillous Days, wherein our Lot is fallen. —No sound
 Divine, nor any other fair Antagonist (for what I know)
 did ever charge his Adversary with controverted Con-
 sequences, as his direct and received Opinion." So the
 Reverend Mr. Fisher, in his *Reasons of Appeal* from the Syn-
 od of Perth and Stirling, in the Affair of Mr. Erskine,
 speaks to the same Purpose, saying, "Is it not a received
 Maxim, That no Man ought to be condemned for Con-
 sequences drawn from his Doctrine, when he disclaims
 them? —Is it not vastly more agreeable to the Law of
 Love and Charity, which thinketh no Evil, to put as fa-
 vourable a Construction upon Mens Words as they can
 possibly admit of?" And ought not we to do the same
 with respect to their solemn Oaths? The Brethren, in
 their first Testimony, seem to have been of this charitable
 Disposition; for, speaking of the Abjuration in its first
 Form, they say, "The most Part of the Ministers of this
 Church, apprehending it brought them under no other
 Obligation but Allegiance to the Sovereign, and an En-
 gagement against a Popish Pretender, and to the Succession
 in the Protestant Line, had Freedom to take the said
 Oath." Tho' in their second Testimony it must be re-
 futed against, as a publick national Sin; albeit, as I'm in-
 formed, they were not unanimous upon the Point, of testi-
 fying thus against it.

4thly, As 'tis utterly a Fault to charge Mens Words, Writ-
 ings; Actions or Oaths with Consequences which they ab-
 solutely refuse, so such as have taken that Oath affirm, and it
 may be thought, "The Parliament of Britain never designed,
 by the Allegiance or Abjuration, to bind the Ministers or
 Members of this Church of Scotland to any Thing contrary
 to their known Principles." And as it is a received Maxim,
 That all Oaths are to be sworn according to the Intention of
 the Imposer, or the Imposers Sense; so, if the Words of that
 Oath will bear a better Construction, Charity obligeth to
 think, the Parliament of Britain never designed to bind us
 thereby to any Thing contrary to our Principles: Seeing, by
 the Act of Security at the Union, the Parliament has ex-
 pressly excoemed the Subjects of Scotland from all Oaths in-
 consistent

consistent with their Principles; and seeing that Parliament, which altered the Word *As* into *Which*, declared, that Oath was not meant to oblige his Majesty's Subjects in Scotland to any Act or Acts inconsistent with the Establishment of this Church of Scotland, according to Law. And, as Mr. *Ehenezer Erskine*, in his *Essay* upon the *Abjuration*, P. 30. speaks; so, with a little Variation, I may say, namely, Seeing by the Union we are excem'd from all Oaths inconsistent with our Principles, 'tis a horrid Reflection upon King and Parliament, to think or say, by that Oath they designed to bind us to Prelacy, or in the least to approve thereof; for, "this would make them worse than *Papists* or *Pagans*, as if no Bonds, nor Ties, nor Covenants, nor Compacts, however sacred, could bind them." Further, once and again the *British* Parliament has changed that Oath, to make such in *Scotland* as scrupled easy, and, in the last Draught thereof, the *Acts* of Parliament mentioned in that Oath, which were reckoned the chief Ground of Scruple formerly, are intirely dropt, besides other Alterations. And tho', as Mr. *Hog* says, when speaking even of such as took the Abjuration in its first Form, "I owe them the Charity and Justice to believe that they sincerely disowned these Evils, viz. the approving of the Union, *Erastian* Prelacy, Supremacy, and *England's* Popish Ceremonies;" so I never did, nor do I question, but many who took the Abjuration in its first Draught, would rather chosen Death, than sworn to defend those Evils, or approved of them: Yet, to me, it is unfair in the Brethren, and those who now exclaim against the *Abjuration*, that they never mention the different *Forms* or *Draughts* thereof, as if there had not been the least Appearance of Difference between them, tho', by the last Form of the Oath, the great and most of the Things scrupled at in the former Draughts were removed. And for any to affirm, as do the *Brethren* in their last *Testimony*, P. 57. "That this Oath was framed at first by the Parliament of *England*, and calculated for the Maintenance of their Constitution, both in Church and State," seems a Mistake; for that the Parliament of *England* had no Design in imposing this Oath to bind any to defend the Church of *England*, seems evident from what *Burnet* tells in the *History of his own Times**, in which he affirms, That when at first Imposing there was a Clause added to the Abjuration for maintaining the Church of *England*, that Clause was laid aside

* Vol. 5. in 4to. P. 576, 577, 578.

aside by the Parliament, and he says, it was a Clause to which the Dissenters could not swear; so the Dissenters having taken this Oath, 'tis an Evidence there is nothing in it designed for securing the Maintenance of the Church of *England*, more than for Maintenance of the Church of *Scotland*. This, as noticed above, is manifest from the Parliament's condescending to drop or alter the Phrases which were reckoned captious and ensnaring.

And 'tis a Question whether the Brethren have acted consistently in publishing it to the World, that they look on the *Abjuration* to be a *publick national Sin*, which is just Cause of Fasting and Mourning; and yet have daily admitted their Magistrates and Members of Council, who have taken it, to partake of sealing Ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, without professing their Sorrow for it, or debarring them in plain Terms from a Communion-table: And 'tis also a Question, whether, at the Election of Counsellors and Magistrates, they ought not publickly to preach against the Abjuration, lest People, according to them, ruine their own Souls.

5thly, Tho' there have been very different Sentiments and Practices anent the *Abjuration* among Ministers of the Gospel in this Church, yet I never heard of any of them, who thought or said the taking thereof was Ground of Separation, nor yet, if it be not of late, of Fasting, or for a *Testimony*; but still they thought it was Duty to keep unite, and exercise *mutual Forbearance*: Which is evident from the 16th Act of Assembly 1712, and from the Consideration of what was done by the Commission of that Assembly afterwards. And further, this was very evident from what was done at a Meeting in *Kinross*, November 5th and 6th 1718, by such Brethren of the Synods of *Fife* and *Perth* as had not taken the Abjuration, where were present the Reverend Mr. *James Hog* Minister of the Gospel at *Carnock*, Mr. *Allan Logan* at *Culross*, Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* at *Portmoak*, Mr. *Ralph Erskine* and Mr. *James Wardlaw* at *Dunfermline*, Mr. *Bathgate* at *Orewel*, Mr. *Thomas Black*, Mr. *John Fleming* and Mr. *William Wilson* at *Perth*, Mr. *Andrew Darling* at *Kinnoul*, and others, to the Number of Thirty, who, in a Declaration drawn up by us at that Time to be laid before the Commission, when speaking of the Commission's interposing with the Government anent such as had not taken the Abjuration, 'tis said, "Being
" deeply impress'd with the Sense of the dismal Effects and
" fatal Consequences of Division and Alienation of Mind
" and

" and Affection among the Lord's Servants, and of the in-
 " dispensible Necessity of mutual Harmony in the Lord
 " among the Ambassadors of the Gospel of Peace; and
 " being much weightied with the present Situation this
 " Church is now in on many Accounts, it was no small
 " Satisfaction to us to understand, that our worthy and dear
 " Brethren, whom we judge in Charity have acted accor-
 " ding to their Light and Conscience in taking the said
 " Oath, do evidence such brotherly Regard to us, and
 " such Tenderness to the Peace and Welfare of this Church,
 " in expressing their Readiness to contribute their best En-
 " deavours for removing all Differences among such as fear
 " the Lord in this Church, in addressing the Government
 " for our Relief, &c."

6thly, Tho' the taking the *Oaths of Allegiance and Ab-
 juration* be no Ground of *Separation*, yet I own the Land has
 Ground to mourn for the dreadful Perjury which many in
 it have been guilty of in taking these Oaths, I mean the
 Favourers of the *Pretender*; many of whom, to bring them-
 selves into Places of Trust, or to qualify them for voting
 in the Election of Members of Parliament, and other-
 wise to do him Service, have taken these Oaths, while,
 in the mean Time, some of them have openly declared
 they were not resolved to keep them. Monstrous Im-
 piety! thus to juggle with the great God in the Matter of
 a solemn Oath. I also own, 'tis just Matter of Mourning
 the sacred Name of God is so taken in vain by the frequent
 needless Repetition of these solemn Oaths, the Evil of
 which hath been shown in a Pamphlet published 1729, in-
 titled, *Britain's Groans under the Weight of multiplied Oaths*.

10th Object. The Church of Scotland since the *Revolu-
 tion* hath broken our *Covenants, National and Solemn League*,
 denied their Obligation, and neglected to renew them;
 Therefore, &c. Now, concerning these National En-
 gagements, 1st, I own it was a Praise and Glory to our
 Land to be a People solemnly devoted unto the Lord, sworn
 to be for him, and to live to his Praise. 2dly, I own this
 Land hath been hainously guilty many Ways, both in for-
 mer and later Times, in breaking our National Engage-
 ments: This is just Ground of Lamentation. Some have
 violated them by turning to Popery and other dreadful Er-
 rors; some by sinful complying with, and declaring for
 Prelacy; some by Schism and sinful Division; some by
 Disloyalty to our rightful Sovereigns; some, yea the Gene-
 rality, by Corruption of Manners. Alas! we have sinned
 with

with our Fathers in this Respect, and that grievously. 3dly, Whereas the Church of Scotland's alledged complying with *Prelacy* at the Revolution, her alledged going in to the *incorporating Union* with England, her allowing of the *Toleration*, and Ministers taking the *Allegiance* and *Abjuration*, are given by Separatists as the great Evidences of her breaking our Covenant-engagements; I think I have said enough already to vindicate this Church from such a Charge, and therefore will not further insist upon Answers to them. But, 4thly, As to the Obligation of these Covenants, 1. 'Tis a Falshood to say, the Church of Scotland denies their Obligation: This is a Calumny; her mentioning the Breaches of them as Causes of solemn Fasting and Humiliation since the Revolution has been a clear Evidence thereof, of which sundry Instances may be given afterwards. 2. That these Covenants were treated with so much Ignominy, that all their Obligation was declared void, and that by Law it was made Death to own them, is an Iniquity for which we ought to mourn. 3. In as far as by them we are sworn against *Papery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresy, Schism, Profaneness, and every Thing that's contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness*; I own they are of inviolable Obligation. But, 5thly, As to the Renovation of our National Engagements, 1. It would be a desirable Thing to see the Land in a fit State and Case for such a Work, by the Lord's pouring out of his holy Spirit upon all Ranks. Yet, 2. Before renewing, some, sundry, yea many among the most judicious, are of Opinion they ought to be rectified, not only by Explications, but by some Alterations: And, to name but in one Particular, 'tis said, They cannot see how any else but real assured Converts or Believers can take the National Covenant, none but such as have what is called *sensible* *reformation Assurance*, in regard the Takers in swearing say, "After long and due Examination of our Consciences in Matters of true and false Religion, we are now thoroughly resolved in the Truth by the Word and Spirit of God." And, speaking of this true reformed Kirk in swearing, say, "To which we join ourselves willingly, as lively Members of the same in Christ our Head." And again, in swearing they say, "We are not moved with any worldly Respect, viz. in taking that Oath, but are perswaded only in our Consciences, thro' the Knowledge and Love of God's true Religion imprinted in our Hearts by the Holy Spirit, as we shall answer to him in the Day when the Secrets of all Hearts shall be disclosed." Now, tho' an assured Believer

never may safely swear and subscribe in such Terms, yet 'tis thought none else can do it. And, 3. Tho' the Covenants were to be renewed, yet it would be a Sin to injoin them under any such severe Penalties as Church and State enforced them with from 1638 to 1649. And, if we are to give a full, free, faithful Testimony against the Sins of our Fore-fathers, as well as against the Sins of our own Day, instancing their Iniquities as Causes of Fastings, then I think we ought to acknowledge the Sin of Church and State in that Period, in imposing these solemn Covenants under such severe Penalties, which were a strong Temptation to the dreadful Sin of Perjury: As in the Case of a Gentleman in the Parish of *Craik*, of whom I have heard it credibly reported, that, being urged to take the Covenant by the Arch-traitor *Sharp* Minister there before he came to be Archbishop of *St. Andrews*; the Gentleman still refusing, *Sharp* told him, If he persisted in his Refusal, he had one Argument more, namely, That the Censure of the highest Excommunication should be pronounced against him, and he knew what the Effect of that might be. To which the Gentleman answered, *If you be there, Mr. Sharp, I'll take a Cart-load of Covenants rather than it come to this.* I am far from thinking the imposing a lawful Oath under a severe Penalty, will make it sinful to take that Oath; but it may be, yea, in my Opinion, it certainly is, a Sin in the Imposers to injoin such a solemn religious Oath under a severe Penalty, especially if in that Oath we are obliged to swear, that, in taking it, *we are not moved with any worldly Respect*, which are the very Words of the National Covenant.

Now, for the Penalties under which these solemn Oaths were imposed by the State, the Parliament in *King Charles I.* his Time, viz. in 1640 *June 11th*, commanded the National Covenant should be taken by all his Majesty's Subjects of *what Rank and Quality soever*, under *all Civil Pains*, which might be Confiscation of Goods, Imprisonment, Banishment, forfeiting of Life and Fortune. And, *October 12th 1643*, the Commissioners of the Convention of *Estates* ordained the *Solemn League and Covenant* to be sworn and subscribed by all his Majesty's Subjects in this Kingdom, "Under the Pain, to such as shall postpone or refuse, to be esteemed and punished as Enemies to Religion, his Majesty's Honour and Peace of thir Kingdoms; and to have their Goods and Rents confiscate for the Use of the Republick, that they shall not bruik nor enjoy any Benefit, Place nor Office within this Kingdom:" And, if any

ny refused to swear and subscribe, then they are "to be
 " cited to answer to the next Parliament as Enemies to Re-
 " ligion, King and Kingdoms, and receive what further
 " Punishment his Majesty and Parliament shall inflict upon
 " them." Now, if these were not pretty severe Laws, I
 leave to any to judge.

The Author or Authors of *Plain Reasons*, p. 87. in an-
 swering the Objection of *pressing the Covenants*, asserts sun-
 dry Falshoods, of which I notice only two. And I would
 have the Reader consider, that here I am not speaking a-
 gainst the Covenants themselves, but against the Manner of
 imposing them. And, 1st, Whereas he says, "It was the
 " Civil Magistrate, and not the Church, that injoined the
 " taking the Covenants under Civil Penalties." But tho'
 'tis the Civil Magistrate only which hath Power to inflict
 Civil Punishment, or to injoin under Civil Penalties; yet
 the General Assembly 1640 (which I think was a Civil Pe-
 nalty) injoined, That no *Expectant* should have the Pri-
 vilege of being a Pedagogue, teach a School, or the Liberty
 to reside in a Burgh, University or College, as refused to
 take the Covenant. And further, I think the General As-
 sembly was chargeable with injoining the Covenant under all
 Civil Pains, in regard that when, upon their Desire, the
Lords of his Majesty's Honourable Privy Council had injoined
 all the Lieges in Time coming to subscribe the Covenant;
 Yet not content therewith, having themselves injoined the
 subscribing that Covenant by *all the Members of this Kirk
 and Kingdom, under all Ecclesiastical Censure*, which might
 be Excommunication; they of new, viz. the Assembly
 1639, "Supplicate his Majesty's High Commissioner, and
 " the Honourable Estates of Parliament, by their Autho-
 " rity, to ratify and injoin the same under all Civil Pains."
 If we desire or intreat another to do what is evil, we are
 surely as guilty as he who doth it at our Desire: This, in
 my humble Opinion, is more than a bidding him *God-speed*.
 And this was the more unreasonable, if, as the Brethren
 affirm in their *Act and Testimony*, p. 18. a little Space be-
 fore this, viz. about the End of the preceeding Year, "Al-
 " most the whole Land had voluntarily, cheerfully and
 " joyfully come under the Oath of God, without any Force
 " or Compulsion, yea, in the Face of great Opposition
 " from the Civil Powers." What then could be the Ne-
 cessity of imposing such hard Penalties? 2dly, He calls it
 a *malignant Objection*, and MERE CALUMNY, to say
 the Covenants were imposed under severe Penalties. But
 only

only let the above-cited Acts of Parliament 1640, and the Acts of Assembly 1639 and 1640 be considered; and then the World will see whether he has not a good Stock of Confidence who can deny this. And further, this Church in that Period, *viz.* the Assembly 1648, Sess. 31. required, That all young Students should take the Covenant at their first Entry to the College, and that hereafter all Persons whatsoever should take the Covenant at their first receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; requiring Synods, Presbyteries and Universities to see that Act carefully observed. What severer Penalties could been inflicted than this, to deny the Seal of God's Covenant to any that had a Scruple to take that Covenant, whether Man or Woman? for all that came to the Lord's Table behoved to swear it. And, in my Opinion, the first Part of that Act was a Civil Punishment, which the Church, according to Presbyterian Principles, hath no Power to inflict: For a Boy or a young Man to enter to the College to study *Humanity, Logicks, Physicks or Mathematicks*, was no Religious Business. Indeed we have sundry Instances in Scripture where Force was used in taking Solemn Covenants, as 2 *Chron.* xv. 12, 13. 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 31. 32. *Ezra* x. 3, 8. *Neb.* xiii. 25. But then it would be considered, those Oaths or Covenants were wholly and altogether Divine, not only as to their *Matter*, but also as to their *Form*, Words, and every Expression: So that People could not be under the least Hesitation, Doubt or Scruple as to the Lawfulness of all contained in them. And there are sundry other considerable Differences between these and our National Engagements, which here I shall not insist upon.

11th *Object.* This Church is erroneous in her Doctrine, therefore 'tis sinful to keep Communion with her. This is a heavy Charge indeed; and, if it was true that her declared or professed Doctrine is corrupt in fundamental Points, and we required to approve thereof, I should think it sufficient Ground of Separation: But tho' the Charge be heavy, I hope, yea, I am persuaded, 'tis utterly false. And what I said in the Beginning of the fourth Chapter, when speaking of Corruption in Doctrine its being just Ground for Separation, might be a sufficient Answer. Indeed 'tis affirmed by sundry, there are not a few of our younger Clergy who are poisoned with very bad Principles. I can say nothing of this from my own Knowledge; yet, from the Accounts I have heard, 'tis to be feared there may be too much Truth in this Charge with respect to
P some:

some: And I own 'tis just Ground of the deepest Humiliation, and a sad Prognostick of approaching Desolation to a Church, where gross Errors creep in among her Pastors, whose *Lips should keep Knowledge*, contending earnestly for the Truth. Yet, whatever heterodox or erroneous Principles some may be leavened with, they do not, nor dare they, vent and openly avow them; and, while they are not owned and defended, they cannot be charged upon the Church of Scotland. Tho' there be a Judas among the Twelve, that will not prove the Eleven to be naughty like him; nor can his Faults be charged upon them, especially while latent and hid.

Now, this of the Church of Scotland's Unsoundness in Doctrine, being among the chief, if not the greatest Objection which sundry make against Communion with her, I shall insist at some more Length in answering the Evidences adduced by such as have separated, or are inclined to separate at this Time.

And, 1st, 'Tis given as a clear Evidence of her Unsoundness in Doctrine, That the Assembly 1720 condemned the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. In Reply, Tho' I am not to dip into that Controversy, and am far from vindicating that Act, which I have heard sundry condemn, who were no Friends to what was called the *Marrow Doctrine*, as particularly that worthy Servant of Christ Mr. Allan Leighton, who said in my Hearing, Wo was his Heart for the Wording of it; yet I think the Church of Scotland was far from designing the least Countenance to Error thereby: And this seems evident from her Explanation of that Act in 1722, at which Time I wish it had been formally repealed, because it was not better worded.

2^{dly}, For Evidence of this, the 8th Act of Assembly 1720 is adduced, in which Ministers are directed to preach the *Necessity of a holy Life in order to the obtaining of everlasting Happiness*. But the Exception against that Act was fully taken off by the General Assembly 1722, in which 'tis declared the Expression is meant of obtaining *Enjoyment and Possession*, but not of *Right and Title* to everlasting Happiness, which, that Assembly says, *all justified Persons have already attained*. And it looks too like Splene in the Author of *Plain Reasons*, that, tho' he tells what was done by the Assembly 1720, with respect to the *Marrow* and this Act, to reproach the Church of Scotland; yet, tho' no doubt he knew what was done by the Assembly 1722 for her Vindication, he never tells the Reader a Word of that: And if in this

and

and the former Particular the Assembly was unsound in 1720, yet she was orthodox in 1722; so this nor the former Instance cannot be the least Ground of Separation.

3dly, 'Tis instanced as an Evidence of the Church of Scotland's Unsoundness both in Doctrine and Discipline, That she hath not censured Professor *Simson* according to the Demerit of his Crime; And in that he was acquitted by the Assembly 1717, "with a bare Admonition and Direction to abstain from such Ways of Teaching for the future; albeit, say they, that Assembly found him guilty of Teaching many damnable Positions." And in 1728 and 1729, being only suspended from Teaching, for as erroneous as they found him to be when his second Libel had been under their Consideration.

Now, as to his first Libel, and what was done upon it in 1717; Indeed, in my Opinion, he was too easy past at that Time, albeit he declared his Adherence to our *Confession of Faith*, and Doctrines therein-contained, and disowned the Errors opposite thereto wherewith he was charged.

2dly, I think it was the Fault of the Church of Scotland, that, to evidence her Zeal against Error, and for the Interest of Truth, she did not free that zealous faithful Servant of Christ, Mr. *James Webster*, from the Burden of a Prosecution by Libel, seeing that Affair was no personal Concern of his own. Yet, 3. 'Tis a Falshood in the Author of *Plain Reasons*, p. 104. to say the Assembly 1717 did find him guilty of teaching what he calls *damnable Positions* which had been libelled against him: For, tho' the *Commission for Purity of Doctrine* did find him guilty of these Things, yet this was not found in 1717, but eleven Years after, namely, in 1728, that Year in which he was suspended. And as to the gross and hainous Errors in his second Libel, considering what an Affront was put upon the great God our Saviour by his erroneous Doctrine, in my humble Opinion he justly deserved Deposition from the holy Ministry for what was found proven against him at that Time, tho' "he owned the orthodox Doctrine concerning the great and fundamental Articles of our holy Religion, disclaimed and renounced all these Errors, and erroneous suspicious Ways of speaking, he had been charged with, and declared himself exceedingly sorry for the Offence he had given by such Ways of expressing himself; and tho' he constantly disowned that ever he held or deliberately taught the gross Errors whereof he was accused."

“ cused.” 2. Tho’ he deserved Deposition for his venting and teaching the Errors proven against him; yet, as was noticed above, the Church of *Scotland* cannot be charged as adopting any of his Errors for their Lenity to him, more than the Church of *Corinth* was chargeable with the dreadful Error of denying the *Resurrection of the Dead*, which some of her Members were leavened with, and for which they had not been censured; or more than that Church could be charged as approving of the horrid Sin of the incestuous Person, because he was not censured, being delivered unto *Satan* by the higher Excommunication; or than the Church of *Pergamos* was guilty of holding the Doctrine of *Balaam* and of the *Nicolaitans*, because she had not censured such as held these abominable Doctrines; nor than the Church of *Thyatira* was guilty of the Errors of that wicked Woman *Jezabel*, who seduced the *Lord’s Servants*, &c. 3. The Church of *Scotland* was so far from approving his Errors, that as she found them relevant to infer Censure, which was a plain Condemning of them; so, notwithstanding of all said by him for alleviating his Offence, the Assembly 1728 censured him with the Sentence of *Suspension*; and that not only from the Office of a Teacher, as *Plain Reasons* represents the Matter, but also that Assembly suspended him “ from Preaching and Teaching, and all Exercise of any Ecclesiastical Power or Function, until another General Assembly shall think fit to take off this Sentence.” And the next Assembly went further than barely to suspend P. S. from Teaching and Preaching, as the Brethren represent it in their *Testimonies*; for that was done by the Assembly 1728. But the Assembly 1729, not only ratified the Sentence of the former Assembly, but also gave it as their Judgment, “ It was not fit nor safe he be further employed in teaching Divinity, and in instructing Youth for the holy Ministry in this Church;” which was a heavier or further Censure than only Suspension from Teaching and Preaching as a Minister. So it is not Matter of Fact, when the Brethren say the Assembly 1729 did rest in the above Sentence of Suspension, first *Testimony* p. 71. and second *Testimony* p. 104. And ’tis well known, there were sundry in the Assembly fully of the Mind he deserved Deposition, who yet, from Apprehensions of as great or greater Damage to follow upon this to the Church of Christ in *Scotland*, they only voted for his Suspension; and I apprehend it flowed more from this, than Lenity to him, that he was not deposed. And that the

Judicatories of the Church of *Scotland* are neither so corrupt in Doctrine, nor so lukewarm in the Cause of Christ, as Separatists represent, seems evident from what the *Brethren* say in their first *Testimony*, p. 49. namely, That it was contrary to the declared Mind of most of the Presbyteries of this National Church by far, that the Assembly 1729 did rest in the Sentence of Suspension against P. *Simson*.

And to affirm, "The Judicatories of this Church have done what in them lay to pull the Crown off from Christ's Head, refusing to give him the Glory of his Supreme Deity," is an unaccountable and groundless Charge, unworthy of the weakest. Did it not ly in their Power to declare the Positions charged against P. *Simson* are Truths, and not Errors? Did it not ly in their Power to censure any that would call them Errors? Was it not in their Power to assaile him without inflicting the least Censure? Was it not in their Power to commend him as teaching sound Doctrine, and one who is fit to be a Professor of Divinity in any University? Was it not in their Power to have put such Respect upon him as to choose him for their Moderator? Were most of the Presbyteries of this National Church, not only for suspending P. S. from Teaching and Preaching, but also, as the Brethren own, for inflicting a higher Censure, which at least behoved to be Deposition? And yet is this Church guilty of denying our great and glorious Lord the Honour of his supreme Deity? or can she be suspected as unsound in that fundamental Doctrine of the glorious Trinity? Tho' some have asserted this*, yet her *Act* in suspending P. S. evidenceth the contrary, in which she says, "The General Assembly do observe with great Pleasure and Thankfulness, that God hath so happily directed all the Judicatories of this Church which have had this Process under their Consideration, that there hath not appeared the least Difference of Sentiment; but, on the contrary, there hath been the most perfect and unanimous Agreement among them as to the Doctrine of the glorious Trinity, and the proper supreme Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, according as the same is revealed in the holy Scripture, and contained in our Confession and Catechisms." Was not this a plain Asserting of our Lord Jesus his proper supreme Deity?

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* Mr. Mair, 2d Test. p. 145.

There is a great Outcry by some against the Church of Scotland, because she hath not excommunicated P. S. But, to the best of my Remembrance, tho' Mr. *William Stewart* did once propose this in the General Assembly, yet, when it was told him the Professor did not offer to vindicate any of those Errors, neither he nor any in the Assembly did urge it, tho' many were urgent for his Deposition: And at that Time some of the *four Brethren* were so far from thinking this the least Ground of Separation, that they earnestly dissuaded the Reverend Mr. *Boston* from taking any Protestation against the Assembly for not proceeding to a higher Censure, lest that should have occasioned Division, or a Rent in the Church of Scotland. And further, as to the Sentence of the *higher Excommunication*, many great and solid Divines, yea, I suppose the most of them, have been of Opinion, that this Sentence is never to be pronounced but only in case of *Obstinacy*, which could not be pretended in this Case; for P. S. was so far from being obstinate, or standing up in Defence of the Errors wherewith he was charged, and had been proven against him, that, as was noticed before, he still denied that ever he taught and held these Errors, declaring, he was *exceedingly sorry* for the Offence he had given by his Way of expressing himself. And, if I mistake not, it will be difficult for the Brethren to find a Scripture for founding a Sentence of *higher Excommunication* against either Professor *Simson* or *William Nimmo*, for not excommunicating of whom they also complain, 2d Test. P. 75, 113. seeing both professed their Sorrow and Repentance for what they had said. However, tho' too much Lenity was shown to Professor *Simson*, that was no Ground of Separation or Secession. *Durham*, commenting on the Epistle to the Church of *Thyatira**, says, "Where Church-Members are polluted, and suffered notwithstanding by Church-Officers to remain in Church-Communion, Christ doth not only not condemn the Clean for keeping Fellowship with them, but expressly requirerh them to continue as they did, then he alloweth not Separation on that Account." And there he hath much more to the same Purpose. And, for further Answer to this Objection, the Reader may consider what I said in the Beginning of the third Chapter.

Fourth Instance of her Unsoundness in Doctrine is the Lenity the Assembly shewed to Professor *Campbell*, notwithstanding of the many Errors vented and published in his Writings,

* On Rev. P. m. 172.

Writings, particularly their adopting his Principle of *Self-love*, while yet our Assemblies have been severe against honest, sound and orthodox Men. Answer 1. In my Opinion, P. G. justly deserved a Rebuke from the General Assembly, for the many uncautious Expressions in his Writings, whereby his Reader is in Danger of being seduced, however sound and orthodox his Explications might be. 2. Whereas the Brethren, in their second Testimony, harp much on this, That the Assembly 1736 adopted Professor Campbell's Principle of *Self-love*, P. 83. where they say, "It is very manifest that the Assembly have adopted this Proposition of Mr. C———'s, as in their Opinion sound and orthodox, viz. *That our Delight in the Glory and Honour of God is the chief Motive of all virtuous and religious Actions*;" affirming, P. 9. *This is a new and strong Ground of Secession*. But, seeing they own some worthy Men in that Assembly did not notice this, it might been charitably thought this was a mere Oversight in the Assembly. And that they had no Design of adopting this Proposition, is evident, in that not so much as one Person in all the Assembly did speak a Word against it; for it cannot be denied, some in that Assembly had the Interest of Truth as much at Heart as the Brethren themselves; and that they had never suffered it to pass without Opposition, had it been noticed by them.

The Reverend Messieurs *Ralph Erskine* and *Thomas Mair*, who have lately made a Secession, joining the *Four Brethren*, as the first of these was a Member of that Assembly, so the other also, according to my Information, was present at the affloizing of the Professor; and yet neither of them discovered this at the Time, to speak a Word themselves, or to excite others, that they might shew what a dangerous Position they were adopting. Shall a bare Oversight be a *strong Ground of Secession*? If this was such, then the Brethren ought to separate from themselves, some of them having been Art and Part in it. Now, if these Brethren never adverted to this, I say, Charity obliged them to think it was pure Oversight that occasioned any Thing like this, and to think the Assembly hath not wickedly departed from the Lord in this Matter, nor adopted this Proposition as their Principle. And, at first View, the Words of that Proposition look so like a Concern for the Honour and Glory of God, 'tis the less to be wondered at tho' the Assembly did not advert to it. And as the Assembly 1736 declared they had not passed a Judgment upon his quarrelled

relled Positions, so, tho' the following Assembly 1737 did not think the former Assembly had given just Ground for that Charge, yet they declared their stedfast Adherence to the Principle of this Church, as contained in our *Confession* and *Catechisms*, as to our chief End in every Thing we do; which was a plain disowning that Principle of *Self-love*, whereby the alledged *new and strong Ground of Secession* is taken away.

3dly, Whereas it hath been complained, he was dismissed upon giving sound Explications, because, say they, the most erroneous Men may give, and have given orthodox Explications of the most dangerous Errors, when prosecuted before Church-Judicatories. I grant it hath been so, and it may be so still; yet what *Festus* said to *Agrippa* was the Custom of the *Romans* *, I suppose 'tis an approved Custom in all the Churches of Christ, namely, That no Man is to be condemned, till he hath Licence to answer for himself concerning the Crime laid against him. *Nicodemus* said to the chief Priests and Pharisees, *Doth our Law judge any Man before it hear him* †? Where Words will bear a sound Meaning, it is an incontestible Rule of Justice, that we receive this for a Person's Meaning; for we are not to condemn Men for their Words till we hear what they can say for themselves. And I suppose 'tis a received Maxim, *Better many guilty should escape, than that one innocent Person be condemned and suffer*. Tho' People are to be admonished and rebuked for using dubious and uncertain Expressions, which may lead others to Error, whatever sound Meaning they may have, and where a Person uses such Expressions frequently without Caution, it gives no small Ground of Suspicion, yet Judges are not to go upon this Ground; for, as says the Reverend Mr. *Fisher*, in his above-cited *Reasons of Appeal*, "It is a received Maxim, " That no Man ought to be condemned for Consequences " drawn from his Doctrine, when he disclaims them." And, as he adds, " it is agreeable to the Law of Love and " Charity, which thinketh no Evil, to put as favourable " a Construction upon Mens Words as they can admit " of."

4thly, Whereas 'tis complained, with respect to P. C. and P. S. That albeit Lenity hath been shewn to them, yet this Church of late hath been harsh, cruel and severe, in censuring sound and orthodox Ministers. Answer, Tho' I condemn them for too great Lenity here, and for Severity

of late to some worthy Brethren, yet all this is no Ground for Separation. What Mr. *Durham* says, commenting upon the Epistle to *Thyatira*, perhaps may be of some Weight, when he says, P. 165. "Difference is to be made
 " betwixt a Man who entertains an erroneous Opinion, and
 " another who is an Heretick; that is, who not only after
 " Admonition continueth in the same Opinion, but also
 " doth persist to vent the same, to the Hurt and Offence
 " of others." Now, however guilty P. S. and P. C. might be, yet, if I mistake not, neither of them can be called *Hereticks*, in the strict Sense of the Word *Heretick*; for none of them offered to defend the erroneous Positions as libelled, or in the Sense alledged against them. Some Separatists say, "The Unsound in this Church are so numerous, that the Erroneous escape just Censure." But whereas never so much as one Person appeared to vindicate any of Professor *Simson's* Errors, when his Process was before the Judicatories of this Church; so, tho' now 'tis near ten Years since he was suspended for Error, yet in our Assemblies none hath ever offered to speak a Word in his Favours, nor sought to have him relaxed from that Sentence. And this, in my Opinion, says much to confute the above Slander, and to evidence the Falseness of the heavy Charge. And tho' I should grant what is alledged, it would not be sufficient Ground of Separation, while our Standards, founded on the Word of God, are owned, and no sinful Terms of Communion required. Hence *Durham* says*,
 " Union, when it is in Competition with the Deposing of
 " some unfaithful Men, and cannot both be obtained together, it, viz. *Union*, ought to be preferred, as we see
 " the Apostle doth, 2 Cor. x. 6. who will not censure in
 " such a Case, lest he stave a Schism, &c."

It is a wide Inference, and altogether groundless, to say, a Church hath adopted such or such Errors, because they have not censured the Erroneous condignly; as if a Thief, who deserves to be hanged, is only sentenced to be whipt and kept in a Correction-house, therefore it should be said the Judges have approved of his Theft: Because, I suppose, our Brethren have not censured, nor so much as judicially admonished, such among themselves or their Followers as have made the *Testimony* a Term of Christian Communion; I'm apt to think, they will not admit this as a sufficient Proof they have adopted this Principle, that all ought to be debarred from the Lord's Table and *Fellowship*.

Meetings who do not adhere to their Testimony. The Reverend Mr. Hog in his *Letters*, P. 26, 27. published 1717, speaks exceeding well to this Purpose (and as much to the present Case as if he had been alive and seen it at this Day) when discoursing of the wicked Priests *Hophni* and *Phineas* the Sons of *Eli*, in Answer to *Separatists*, where he says, " Their Inference then from that Text, 1 Sam. ii. 17, 24. (if they speak to the Purpose) must be this, viz. " We ought to separate from a true Church, and set up a " distinct Church within it, if but two scandalous Ministers " be not brought under due Censure, tho' somewhat be " done against them, and their Wickednesses be truly re- " sented; as old *Eli* the High Priest had reproved his " Sons pertinently and gravely, tho' I confess he ought to " have done more. I shall be yet more liberal, What tho' " not only two, but a great Number of scandalous Mini- " sters in a true Church do escape condign Censure? This " affordeth no Ground for relinquishing of them, and setting " up a distinct Church: In such a Case the Scandals are " not espoused, nor do even Errors and Heresies become " the Sentiments of a Church that professeth the Truth " opposite to them, tho' erroneous or scandalous Persons " may have so much Countenance as to prove too strong " for the sounder Part, as the Sons of *Zeruiab* were too " strong for *David*. " Tho' *Eli* did not censure his Chil- " dren as they deserved, yet no Man can say *Eli* adopted or " approved of their Sins. The not censuring, or the not " inflicting of a higher Censure upon them, and upon Mr. " *Nimmo*, these, and most of the Things laid to the Charge " of the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, are only Omissions; " and I never read of any, who thought Omissions in a true " Church of Christ to be sufficient Cause of Separation. And, " sometime since 1733, I heard a worthy Minister (for whom " our late *Separatists* have justly much Regard) declare he " did not think Omissions in a Church sufficient Ground of " Separation from her, and I hope he will still be of the " same Mind; and, had Omissions been Ground of Separa- " tion, then the Church of *Corinth* and *Athen* Churches should " been forsaken tho' Christ walked in them.

And further, as to the not censuring P. S. and P. C. ac-
 cording to the Demerit of their Offence, here can be no
 such Step of Defection as is Ground of Separation; for
 sometimes the Church of Christ hath judged it convenient
 to pass the Erroneous without inflicting any Ecclesiastical
 Censure for their Offence; as in the first New-Testament

General Assembly or Council, *Acts* xv. we read, It seem'd good to the Apostles and Elders of the Church, yea, and also to the Holy Ghost, to condemn the corrupt erroneous Doctrine of such as believed in *Judea*, and yet taught the People believed to be circumcised and keep the Law of *Moses*, as ever they would be saved. This was Doctrine which subverted precious Souls, and overturned the Foundation of the Christian Religion; and yet, tho' the Council condemned the Doctrine, we read not a Word of any Censure inflicted upon the Preachers or Teachers thereof: Nor do we read of any Censure inflicted on the false and corrupt Teachers which were in the Churches of *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*. And it argues great Weakness to say with some, that the Church of Christ was only in her Infancy in these Times, as if the Practice of the Apostles and of the Church of Christ in their Days was not to be argued from, nor regarded as a Rule; and, tho' sometimes Censures be not adequate to the Crime, that will not say we ought to separate from a Church. I'm apt to think, the Brethren, and all our Separatists, think Suspension from the Exercise of the Ministry too gentle a Censure for a Diocesan Bishop (seeing they complain of the Church of *Scotland* at the *Revolution* for saying, she would not depose any Episcopal Incumbents simply for their Judgment anent the Government of the Church) especially if that Bishop had received Consecration to the Office of Episcopacy after he was ordained a Presbyterian Minister, and if he had broken thro' Cautions laid down by a General Assembly in voting in Parliament, and especially if these Cautions had been laid down with *Certification of Deposition, Infamy and Excommunication*, and, by his usurped Power, had also oppressed the Kirk of Christ with Novations in the Worship of God; And yet the General Assembly 1638 was thus guilty in the Case of Bishops *Lindsay* and *Abernethy*; but no Man ever dream'd that was Ground of any Thing like Separation from the Church of *Scotland* at that Time, tho' sundry might think they deserved Deposition at least, if not Excommunication, which were the Censures inflicted upon some other Bishops: And whatever our Defections be, yet, as our pure Standards of Doctrine are still owned by Profession, so, as Mr. *Hig* says *, "Tho' doctrinal Errors are gradually creeping in among us, yet there is no National or Church Deed done or enacted by us hitherto which carry us off from these Standards; they have still the Authority they ever

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* Letter, P. 4.

“ ever had, and which any Church can give ;” And therefore, as there he argues, we ought not to separate from her.

4thly, Our Brethren, in their *second Testimony*, seem to instance the publishing that little Book, intituled, *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism revised and rendered fitter for general Use*, as an Evidence of the Declining and Backsliding of this Church and Land, P. 100 being compared with P. 114. whereas, if I be not misinformed, few in the Land, whether Ministers or People, have had Occasion to see it, nor, for ought I know, can they tell where nor by whom it was composed, whether in *Scotland, England or Ireland*; a Book, tho' searched for thro' most of the Stationers Shops in *Edinburgh*, could not be found; And the Church of *Scotland* had condemned that Book before the Brethren's *Testimony* was published; for, not only the Synod of *Lothian*, but also the Commission of the General Assembly had testified and cautioned against it before that Time. So the Conduct of our Brethren in this Matter hath shown too great an Inclination to blacken the Church of *Scotland*, and render her odious upon slender Grounds; for such as read that *Testimony*, must think that *Catechism* hath someway been the Deed of the Church of *Scotland*, tho' she hath given her *Testimony* against it.

And, upon the whole, our worthy Ancestors, who were valiant for the Truth, never dreamed of Separation to be their Duty because some erroneous Men were not censured as they deserved; So far from this, that they staid still in the Church, even when they were censuring Men for preaching and writing against Error, and in Vindication of the Truth; as was noticed in Mr. *Rutherford's* Case, who was sent to *Aberdeen* in 1637, and confined there for preaching and writing against *Arminianism*. Tho' Separatists in the primitive Times were never able to prove their Charge, yet, “ There was nothing more casten up to the “ Orthodox by the *Novatians* and *Donatists*, than that “ they were defective in this, in admitting to, and continuing in the Ministry Men that were corrupt.”

12th Obje^{ct}. The Church of *Scotland* is corrupt in her Worship. And, among other frivolous Evidences of this, the Author of *Plain Reasons* charges her as embracing and complying with a set Form of Words (injoined by the *Toleration-act*) in praying for the supreme Authority; and in his modest Stile says, “ It seems to border upon Blasphemy, to invoke the Lord to bless what in his Word he

"condemns,—to wit, a Prelatick Constitution either in
 "Church or State, all very gross Corruptions in the
 "Worship. And again says, "To pray for a Prelatick
 "King and Parliament, so and so circumstantiate, doth evi-
 "dence no small Part of her Unsoundness in Worship †."

Answer. 'Tis no prescribing a Form of Prayer to injoin
 us to pray *nominatim* for those in Authority; and 'tis well
 known Presbyterian Ministers do not confine themselves
 to a stinted Form of Words in praying for the Publick:
 And to say it borders, or seems to border, upon Blasphemy,
 to invoke the Lord to bless a Prelatick King, is to accuse
 the Church of Scotland of Blasphemy, or bordering upon it
 in 1638, when that Assembly, in their *Supplication* to the
 King, tells his Majesty, who was a *Prelatick King* under
 a *Prelatick Constitution*, "That it had been their great Care
 "to join with their hearty Prayers to God for a Blessing
 "upon his Majesty's Person and Government,—and to be-
 "seech him, by whom Kings reign, to add a further
 "Lustre to his Majesty's glorious Diadem, and that he
 "might make them a blessed People under his long and
 "prosperous Reign." So again, the Assembly 1639, in
 their *Supplication*, and again the Assembly 1641 and 1642,
 and the Assembly 1647, in their *Directions for secret and
 private Worship*, says, "We ought to pray for all our Supe-
 "riors, the King's Majesty, the Queen and Children." And
 the King at that Time was a Prelatick King, and had
 never taken the Covenants; yea, in 1642, he told our
 General Assembly he was designed to govern the Kirk of
 England by her own Canons and Constitutions. And he
 declared after this, that he held himself obliged in Con-
 science to maintain Archbishops and Bishops, &c. as is evi-
 dent from the *Declaration* of the Assembly 1648. And
 tho' that Assembly directed to pray for the Queen, yet she
 was not only of Prelatick, but of Popish Principles, and
 an avowed Enemy to the Truth; of whom the Assembly
 1645, in their *Seasonable Warning*, had said, "The Queen
 "is most active abroad, using all Means for strengthening
 "the Popish, and suppressing the Protestant Party, &c."
 Will our Separatists say, those Assemblies were guilty of
 Blasphemy, or bordering upon it? And to pray for the
 King's Majesty *nominatim*, is no praying by a set Form.
 Hence Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine*, in Preface to *God's little Rem-
 nant*, p. 22. says, *I pray duly for his Majesty by Name.* 'Tis
 the Command of the great God, *That Prayers, Intercessions*
and

and giving of Thanks be made, as for all Men; for Kings and all that are in Authority in particular, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. But, having insisted upon this of alledged Corruption in Worship at some greater Length upon the fourth Chapter, I shall not further enlarge upon it in this Place.

13th Object. This Church is unaccountably defective, having still omitted to do some Things of vast Moment, some of which ought to been done at her first Constitution in 1690: As, 1. Her neglecting by an express particular Act to condemn the blasphemous Supremacy. 2. To assert the Headship of Christ over his Church, against such as have usurped his Royal Dignity. 3. That they have not by an express Act asserted the Divine Right of Presbytery. 4. That they have not asserted by some such Act the intrinsic Power of the Church. 5. That they have not explicitly approved of the covenanted Reformation attained unto from 1638 to 1649 inclusive. 6. That they have not revived and corroborated the Acts and Constitutions of former General Assemblies; especially between 1638 and 1649. 7. That they did not by an express Act assert the Obligation of our Covenants. And, 8. That they have not by an express Act condemned the sinful Oaths which were under Prelacy from 1660. 9. That they have not made a particular Confession of the many Steps of Defection the Church and State were guilty of in the late Times before the Revolution. 10. That Ministers do not testify against the Corruptions of the Times. 11. 'Tis complained that the Church of Scotland hath not addressed for rescinding the Act rescissory. 12. That due Care is not taken in licensing Probationers. And, lastly, That tho' Error abounds, yet no faithful Testimony hath been emitted against it.

Now, for Answer. 1. I know no Scripture-precept, Promise nor Example, obliging Churches to make such particular assertory Acts. 2. Such Acts could not be of great Use, unless backed with clear Scripture-proofs for Confirmation of what is asserted, human Authority being of small Weight in this Case. And, 3. Most of the Things complained of in this Objection, if culpable Omissions, then they are such as the Church of Scotland was guilty of in what are reckoned her best Times, viz. from 1638 to 1649. And, 4. Tho' the Church of Scotland hath not made particular assertory Acts anent these Things, yet she has plainly and particularly asserted her Principles upon most of these Points. 5. The Brethren themselves have not made particular Acts anent these Points, having only made

made an Act for all, without insisting upon Arguments for confirming their Assertions. Now, I humbly think, these might suffice for *Answer* to this Objection: Yet all or most of these Things being complained of, not only by the Author of *Plain Reasons*, but also by the Reverend Mr. Ralph Erskine and Mr. Mair in their *Representation and Testimony* given in to the Commission in August 1736, and also in the *Brethrens* second *Testimony*; for convincing the Reader of the Groundlessness of the Charge, I shall consider each of them a little more particularly.

1st, As to her not condemning the Supremacy by a formal explicate Act, if this is a Fault, then the Church of Scotland was as guilty from 1638 to 1649: For tho', under Prelacy, the King's Supremacy over all Persons, and in all Causes Civil and Ecclesiastick, had been asserted by the Parliament; Yet neither in 1638, nor in any Assembly afterwards, did they ever explicitly by a formal Act condemn it. 2^{dly}, The first Parliament of King William and Queen Mary, in their first Act, abrogated the Act of Supremacy in the most extensive Manner. And, 3^{dly}, If the General Assembly that Year did not make an express Act condemning the Supremacy, yet, among other Causes of Fastings, our first General Assembly after the Revolution mentions the Supremacy as one; for speaking of the Sins of former Times under Prelacy, they say, *The Supremacy was advanced in such a Way, and to such a Height, as never any Christian Church acknowledged*: And this is more than was done by any Assembly from 1638 to 1649. This was a plain condemning of the King's Supremacy, and a declaring it to be Ground of Fastings. But some, as the Brethren in their second *Testimony*, p. 53. will say, This was not an absolute condemning of all Supremacy in Civil Rulers over the Church. I grant the Words will scarcely prove that; but 'tis the less to be admired if we consider what Mr. Gillespie says *, viz. "There have been great Disputes among good and learned Men about the Oath of Supremacy." And Burroughs says †, "The King is Supreme to govern in a Civil Way, not only the Civil State, but even Affairs that belong to the Church." And he adduceth Arguments confirming this. And those valiant Champions for Presbytery, the Ministers and Elders of the Province of London, in their *Vindication of Presbyterian Government*, affirm, "The Magistrate is, in a Civil Notion, the supreme Governor in all Ecclesiastical Causes, the
"Keeper

* *Mis. Ques.* p. 208. † *On Hof.* Chap. i. 8, 11.

"keeper of both Tables, the nursing Father of the Church, &c." Tho' they deny that as a Magistrate he is any Church-officer, or that the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are committed to him. And the Reverend Mr. *John Livingston*, when before the Council of *Scotland* in 1662, said, "I have likewise been of that Judgment, and am, and will be, that his Majesty is supreme Governor in a Civil Way over all Persons, and in all Causes." And the Reverend Mr. *James Fraser* of *Brea*, who is cited by the Author of *Plain Reasons* as a Person of Weight, when sisted before the Council of *Scotland* in 1681, as then he owned the King's Authority tho' a professing Papist, so, as to the King's Power in Ecclesiastical Matters, he acknowledged the Persons of Ministers, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, are subject to him; and that he had a Jurisdiction Civil, reaching not only to Civil Things, but likewise to Spirituals. And I think all Presbyterian Divines own, that, altho' the King hath not a *dogmatick*, nor *didactic*, nor *discritick* Power, so as to make new Articles of Faith, to set up any new kind of Worship, to license or ordain Men to preach the Gospel, nor to preach or administer Sacraments himself, nor to exercise Church-discipline, nor determine in Controversies of Religion, nor to make Church-canons and Constitutions, nor to depose Ministers from any Part of their Office; yet they own he has not only a defensive, but a regulating ruling Power, and also a coercive Power; Having much Power *circa sacra*, tho' no Power *in sacris*, no Power that is properly, formally and intrinsically Ecclesiastical, his Power being only Civil. As tho' the Civil Magistrate or Church-judicatories have not a marital Power as a Husband, nor a paternal Power as a Father, yet they have Power to censure either Wives or Children for their unbecoming Carriage; and so of their Power to censure Husbands and Fathers, if they transgress as to relative Duties.

2dly, As to her not asserting the *Headship* of Christ over his Church by a formal Act and in express Terms; If this is a Fault, then the Church was as guilty in that reforming Period, from 1638 to 1649. 2. I affirm the Church of *Scotland* has owned, yea, asserted this in as plain Terms as ever any Church of Christ has done or can do. As the first Assembly after the Revolution, in her 7th Act for retaining Soundness of Doctrine, she obliged all *Probationers* licensed to preach, all *Intrants* into the Ministry, and all other Ministers and Elders received into Communion with us in Church-

Church-Government, to subscribe their Approbation of the Confession of Faith. And in the 25th Chap. of that *Confession*, Sect. 1. 'tis affirmed, *That Christ is the Head of the Universal Church.* And in the last Article 'tis affirmed, "There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ." And in the 30th Chap. Art. 1st. 'tis again affirmed, *The Lord Jesus is the Head of his Church.* Again, the Commission of the General Assembly, in their *Seasonable Admonition* published in 1698, p. 6. says, "We do believe and own, that Jesus Christ is the only Head and King of his Church:" And this Commission was approved in their whole *Actings* by the next General Assembly. Again, the Assembly 1705, in their 7th Act anent Mr. *Hepburn*, affirms in plain Terms, *That the Lord Jesus Christ is the alone King and Head of his Church.* So the Brethren in asserting, as p. 52. of their *Act and Testimony*, That the Church of Scotland, neither in 1690, nor in any of her Assemblies since, hath asserted Christ to be what really he is, the alone supreme Head and King over his Church; they assert that which is not Fact.

3dly, As to the Charge of neglecting at the *Revolution*, and in all Times since, by an Act of Assembly to assert and ratify judicially the *Jus Divinum* of Presbytery; Answer 1. The Divine Right of Presbytery was asserted by the Parliament 1690, Act 5th; in which Act, as was noticed before, they established Presbytery, as being agreeable to the Word of God, and most conducive to the Advancement of true Piety and Godliness. 2. If this Omission was a Fault in the Church of Scotland at the *Revolution*, then it was as much her Fault in 1638; For tho' that Assembly condemned Episcopacy as having no Foundation in God's Word, and as being contrary unto it; yet they have no express Word of Presbytery as being founded upon the Word of God, tho' I suppose it was their Judgment, as 'tis well known it was the Judgment of the Church of Scotland at the *Revolution*: And when by their Act restoring the Judicatories of this Church to their former Privileges, of the Date December 17th 1638, according to the printed Acts, they restored them only as they were constitute by the *Book of Policy*, without any express mention of the Divine Right of Presbytery. 3. The General Assembly 1690, in their Act for a National Fast, after mentioning "the great Purity of Government which this Church had attained unto thro' the Mercy of God," they instance it as a Cause of Feasting,

sing, "That the Government of the Church was altered, and Prelacy introduced, which had always been grievous to this Nation, without the Church's Consent, and contrary to the standing Acts of our National Assemblies." And in that Act they bless God that the Parliament had found it was so. And that Assembly, in *Instructions* to their *Commissions*, injoin them to see they be careful "to admit none to Ministerial Communion with this Church, or to share of the Government, but such as oblige themselves to own and subscribe the *Confession of Faith*, and profess their Submission and Willingness to join and concur with the *Presbyterian Church-Government*." And I think these were as much, yea, more an owning the *Divine Right of Presbytery*, as what was done by the Assembly 1638. And the Assembly 1694, in their *Letter* to the King's Majesty, they express their Sense of God's great Goodness; for which, say they, "*We do bless his holy Name* in disposing and enabling your Majesty to do so great Things to this Church:" And, among other Things for which they give Thanks, they mention the Lord's disposing his Majesty "to give all Assurances of his Royal Resolutions to maintain *Presbyterian Government* in the Church of Scotland." Again, the *Commission* in 1706, which was approved by the subsequent Assembly, plainly asserted the *Divine Right* of Presbytery, in their first *Address* to the Parliament, where, speaking of our *Confession of Faith* and *Presbyterian Government*, &c. they say, "Which we are persuaded are agreeable to the Word of God, and founded thereon." And further, her Zeal for *Presbyterian Government* may be clearly seen in the *Representations* and *Addresses* of the *Commission* of Assembly 1711, which were unanimously approved by the Assembly 1712, and ordered to be put in Assembly's Register; and also by the *Seasonable Warning* of the *Commission* 1713, of the Date August 19th that Year, in which they assert, "The Constitution of this Church is founded upon, and agreeable to, the Word of God." And as that *Seasonable Warning* was voted unanimously, so for this they had the Thanks of the subsequent General Assembly; and what is founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, that is undoubtedly of *Divine Right*. Further, the Church of Scotland declared the *Divine Right of Presbytery* most expressly by her *Commission* 1698, their *Seasonable Admonition*, p. 5. published that Year, in which they say, "We do believe and own, that Jesus Christ is the only Head and King of his Church; and

" and that he hath instituted in his Church Officers and
 " Ordinances, Order and Government, and not left it to
 " the Will of Man, Magistrate or Church to alter at their
 " Pleasure ; and we believe this Government is neither *Pro-*
 " *lati*cal nor *Congregational*, but *Presbyterian*, which now,
 " thro' the Mercy of God, is established amongst us ; and
 " believe we have a better Foundation for this our Church-
 " Government, than the Inclination of the People or Laws
 " of Men, &c." And that Commission was approved by
 the next Assembly : But none can give any such express De-
 claration anent the *Jus Divinum* of *Presbytery* by our As-
 semblies from 1638 to 1650, for all the Clamour of Sepa-
 tists.

ably, Whereas 'tis said, This Church has never asserted
 her *intrinsic Power*. I answer, As the State in 1689, Act 5th,
 June 7th, ratified the *Confession of Faith*, which, says Mr.
 Wodrow †, was a Step of Reformation the Church of Scot-
 land had never attained unto since the Reformation, where-
 by the *scriptural and pure Doctrine* of this Church is embodied
 with the *Civil Liberties* ; So the Church of Scotland hath
 declared for it I know not how often, by injoining all her
 Ministers and Elders to subscribe our *Confession of Faith*,
 whereby they have asserted the *intrinsic Power* of the
 Church ; in regard, Chap. 31. Art. 2. it is affirmed, " If
 " Magistrates be open Enemies to the Church, the Mini-
 " sters of Christ of themselves, by vertue of their Office,
 " or they with other fit Persons, upon Delegation from
 " their Churches, may meet together in such Assemblies."
 If this be not a sufficient asserting hereof, then the *West-*
minster Assembly hath been defective. Further, the Gene-
 ral Assembly 1707, in the *Form of Process*, which was ap-
 proved by the Assembly that Year *nemine contradicente*,
 in the 1 Chap. Art. 1. expressly asserts this *intrinsic Power*,
 while they say, " Our Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted a
 " Government and Governors Ecclesiastical in his House,
 " with Power to meet for the Order and Government
 " thereof; and to that Purpose the *Apostles* did immediate-
 " ly receive the Keys from the Hands of their Lord and
 " Master JESUS CHRIST, and did use and exercise the
 " same upon all Occasions : And Christ hath from Time
 " to Time furnished some in his Church with Gifts for
 " Government, and with Commission to exercise it when
 " called thereunto, and has promised his Presence to be
 " with them to the End of the World." And further,

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before

before that Time, viz. 1698, the Church of Scotland asserted the intrinſick Power in the moſt expreſs and poſitive Terms imaginable in her *Seasonable Admonition*, p. 19. which ſhe printed and publiſhed to the World that Year.

5thly, As to the Complaint, *That in no Time ſince the Revolution has the Church of Scotland explicitly approved of the covenanted Reformation attained from the Year 1638 to 1649, inclusive.* This is ſuch a General, that I know not what is meant thereby; but, as the General Aſſembly, by their Act for a ſolemn Faſt, 1690, approved of our Reformation from Popery, ſo I doubt not by that Act they alſo approved of what real Reformation there was from 1638 to 1649: For, after ſaying “ Our gracious God
“ ſhewed early Kindneſs to this Land, in ſending the
“ Goſpel among us, and afterwards in our Reformation
“ from Popiſh Superſtition and Idolatry; and it had the
“ Honour beyond many Nations, of being, after our firſt
“ Reformation, ſolemnly devoted unto God, both Prince
“ and People,” — they ſay, (and no doubt they are ſpeaking of the Reformation attained unto from 1638 to 1649.) “ Through the Mercy of God, this Church had at-
“ tained to great Purity of Doctrin, Worſhip and Govern-
“ ment; but this was not accompanied with ſuitable perſonal
“ Reformation, &c.” And there was as much Ground to condemn the Aſſembly 1638, and ſubſequent Aſſemblies in that Period, for not approving explicitly all the Steps of Reformation attained unto from 1560 to 1596, as there is to condemn Aſſemblies for this Omiſſion. But further, if, by the *Covenanted Reformation*, they mean the taking and impoſing the Covenants upon all the Members of this Kirk and Kingdom under ſevere Penalties, and their being ſo zealous for them, as to debar all from the Lord’s Table that ſhould reſuſe them; then, I think, it has been commendable in this *Revolution Church*, that ſhe has not approved of that Conduct.

6thly, As to her not reviving and corroborating the Reſolutions, Acts and Conſtitutions of former faithful General Aſſemblies, eſpecially from 1638 to 1649. And I know not how often *Plain Reasons* cites and extols the Acts of Aſſemblies in that Period, I ſuppoſe between thirty and forty Times; and particularly P. 200. where he affirms, That, tho’ there were Corruptions in the Church between 1638 and 1649, occaſioned by the Spear of Papiſts and Prelatiſts, yet the Church lived ſo near the Lord in thoſe pleaſant and covenanting Days, — “ That her Officers
“ and

and Members did never sing a *Requiem* unto themselves, "until they got all those Corruptions purged out." But, if he thinks so, then I earnestly desire him to show how the Act of Assembly 1649, which gives the decisive Vote in the Election of Pastors to the Elders only, is reconcileable with what he says P. 132. where he affirms, The legal Vote in calling Pastors is purchased with the precious Blood of Christ to all the Remainder of the Parish as well as to Elders, &c. And, seeing he affirms the *Commission* of a General Assembly is without *Divine Warrant*, and no *Court of Christ*, he may be asked, How he thinks all Corruptions were purged out, when that Assembly 1649 appointed a *Commission*, giving them Power to censure and depose Ministers, &c. And the Brethren, in their Testimonies, speak much to the same Purpose with the Author of *Plain Reasons* in extolling that Period, as in P. 19. of their *Act and Testimony*, where they affirm, That, from 1640 or 1641 till the Year 1650, "the Building of the House of God went on prosperously and successfully:" And, P. 25. they say, "The Judicatories of the Church then were carrying on the Work of Reformation with a beautiful and pleasant Harmony:" And, P. 32. of their first *Testimony*, speaking of the Close of that Period, they say, "The Lord having performed his Work in Zion, he did reign among his Ancients gloriously till the Publick Resolutions." But, from first to last, I think in all their *Testimony* they never give Testimony against, nor so much as mention, any one Particular in which the Church failed or was faulty in that Period. But, passing that, I think this Exception against the Conduct of the Church of Scotland is much of the same Nature with the former, and 'tis scarcely worth the noticing; for, 'tis pretty evident from what hath been said already, it had been the Sin of the Church of Scotland to have revived all these Acts, declaring them obligatory, tho' none of them are prescribed for their Antiquity; and sometimes the Assembly hath revived one of these Acts, and sometimes another, as the Assembly 1736 revived the Act 1638 anent planting vacant Congregations: And of what Advantage could it be, to revive such Acts as that of Assembly 1645, in which 'tis enjoined, *That those who are taught in Aristotle be found well instructed in his Text?* Our Brethren declare, They receive, acknowledge and approve of all the Acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1650, in as far as they were passed for advancing and carrying on a Covenanted Reformation, &c. And so might they acknowledge

knowledge all the Acts of the Council of *Trent*, all the Acts under Prelacy, all that is in the Test, yea, or in the Alcoran, in as far as they are right, there being some good Things in them all: And is it not a commendable Term of Christian Communion, that People adhere with implicate Faith to what they know not? And who can tell what Acts, or what Part of such Acts they mean or intend?

7thly, As to her not asserting expressly the Obligation of our Covenants upon the present and succeeding Generations. 'Tis a Mistake to say the Church of *Scotland* hath never declared this: For again and again our General Assemblies since the Revolution have particularized the Breach of our Covenants among the Causes of Fasting; which was a declaring to the World they looked upon them as obligatory. And, to name no more here, the Assembly 1701, *Act* 9th, is very express to this Purpose, where they say, "Our Sins are the more aggravated, that they are against so many solemn repeated Vows and Engagements unto, and Covenants with our God, which have been openly violated and broken by Persons of all Ranks, and treated with publick Contempt, Indignities and Affronts; the Particulars are too many to be here insert, &c." And the Commission, 1698, in their *Seasonable Admonition*, says, "We own it is the Mercy of our Land, that we are a Land in Covenant with God, and we lament for the Breaches thereof, &c." This was a plain owning the Obligation thereof.

8thly, Whereas 'tis complained, our Assemblies have never by any express Act condemned the sinful Oaths imposed under Prelacy from 1660 to the Revolution; I answer, Tho' she hath not made any particular Act to this Purpose, yet all these sinful Oaths were condemned by our first General Assembly in 1690, where, in their Causes of Fasting, they instance, "The imposing and taking ungodly unlawful Oaths and Bonds, whereby the Consciences of many have been polluted and scared, and many ruined and oppressed for refusing and not taking them." Indeed 'tis to be wished the Assembly had been more particular in mentioning some of those sinful Oaths, as that self-contradictory Oath the *Test*, &c. But yet, as to the sinful Oaths in the late Times, the Church of *Scotland* was far more full, free and faithful at the Revolution in confessing them, than was the Church in 1642; for, in their Causes of Fasting, they have not one Word of the sinful Oaths which had

had been imposed in the preceeding Period, and some of them were very hainous, as hath been noticed already.

9thly, As to her not making Confession of the particular Steps of Defection the Church and State were guilty of in late Times before the *Revolution*, as was the Practice of former reforming Times; I answer, Some of these Things, which are reckoned Steps of Defection, were debatable Points, and much debated among the truly Godly, Learned and Judicious, and therefore they thought it Duty to pass them over in Silence; but, for other Defections in which they were clear, they have not been so silent as is alledged: For, in their Act of Assembly 1690 for a national Fast, they expressly confess "The late great and general Defection of this Church and Kingdom; and say, It is also a Matter of Lamentation, that, under this great Defection, there hath been too general a Fainting, not only amongst Professors of the Gospel, but also among Ministers, yea, even amongst such who in the main Thing did endeavour to maintain their Integrity, in not giving seasonable and necessary Testimony against the Defections and Evils of the Time, and keeping a due Distance from them." And our General Assemblies have seriously recommended it to all Ministers, to be very explicate and particular in the Acknowledgment of National Sins; as did the Assembly 1699 and the Assembly 1700 in their Causes of Fasting that Year, they mention the fearful Backslidings and Persecutions of the late Times, which, say they, have not yet been sufficiently mourned over. But, whatever Defect hath been in this Matter, I'm sure they have been ten Times more express and particular than was the Assembly 1642 in their Causes of Fasting at that Time, which was their first National Fast after that begun Reformation; for, at that Time, they make not the least Mention or particular Acknowledgment of any one of the many hainous Backslidings of the former Period.

And the Author or Authors of *Plain Reasons*, P. 116. complaining of this Church in 1690, for not being so full in the Enumeration of the Sins of former Times as they ought, says, "If this was the Way to have the Land brought to a humble Sense of their Sins,——I have done with it." And our Brethren, in their *Act and Testimony*, P. 51. complain of this Church at the *Revolution*, as being very unlike to the Church of Scotland in former reforming Times, in that she did not condemn the former Steps of Defection. But, at the Revolution, this Church

was

was far more particular than was the reforming Church in 1642: For, as the Church at that Time appointed no Fasts for the former Sins of the Land, neither in their first Assembly 1638, nor in 1639, nor in 1640, nor in 1641; so, when they appointed a National Fast in 1642, are they particular in enumerating the Sins of former Times? Far from this, not one Word of *Covenant-breaking* in former Times, not a Word of the *King's Supremacy*, which had been established in 1606 by Act of Parliament in the plainest Terms; Nor have they ever a Word of that sinful Oath which had been enjoined by the Parliament, in which People were to swear, "That they acknowledged the King to be the only supreme Governor in this Kingdom, over all Persons, and in all Causes; ——— and that at their utmost Power they should defend, assist and maintain his Majesty's Jurisdiction foresaid against all deadly, and never to decline his Majesty's Power and Jurisdiction, by this their Oath upon the holy Evangel." Never a Word of the Evil of *Prelacy's* being brought in, and *Presbytery* overturned; never a Word of the cruel Persecution, Imprisonment and Banishment of Christ's faithful Servants in former Times; never a Word of the Sin of bringing in the *Service-book*, or *Book of Canons*; never a Word of the sinful Oaths that had been taken by many Ministers at their Entrance to the Ministry under Prelacy; never a Word of the Oath *ex officio*, which *Rutherford* calls a *damnable Oath*, and says, "The high Commission put it upon Innocents to cause them accuse themselves against the Laws of Nature." See Preface to *Lex Rex*: Nor was there a Word in the Causes of that Solemn Fast of the hainous Sins of our *Scots* Nobility, who were at Court in 1639, their abjuring the National Covenant and Assembly at *Glasgow* ||; nor of the innocent Blood shed by the Governor of the Castle of *Edinburgh* at the King's Command that Year †; nor in the Causes of that Fast was there a Word of the Heaven-daring Impiety, the Sins of the Throne in the hainous Profanation of the Lord's Day, which his Majesty's Father and himself had been guilty of, by their Proclamations, commonly called the *Book of Sports*; the one in the Year 1618, and the other in 1634. And, should you ask, What then were the Sins specified in the Causes of that Fast? I answer, "Gross Ignorance, and all sort of Wickedness among the greater Part, Sec-

"curity, mere Formality, Unfruitfulness among the best," and Unthankfulness in all." And there is not one Word more of any Sin in all the Causes of that Solemn Fast.

The Brethren, in their *Act* and *Testimony*, p. 8. when complaining of the Commissions 1734 and 1735, because when appointing Fasts they were not more particular in enumerating the Sins of the Land, say, "This was a lamentable Evidence that a sincere and thorow Reformation was neither aimed at nor intended." And, p. 112. speaking of those Fasts, say, "When the Sins of the present Times are not particularly mourned over, it cannot be expected that there will be any faithful Enquiry into, or Acknowledgment of, the Defections and Backslidings of former Periods." But, if there was any Ground to say so as to our Fasts in 1734 and 1735, or at the Revolution, or any Time since, then there was far more Ground to say so of the Assembly 1642; for these Commissions were far more full and faithful in their Enumeration of the Sins, both of former and present Times, than was that Assembly: And this is evident to a Demonstration, by comparing the Assembly's Causes of Fasting in 1642 with the Causes drawn up by our Commissions in these last Years. And yet readily our Brethren would call them unjust and uncharitable, who would say the Conduct of the Assembly 1642, with respect to their solemn Fast, was a lamentable Evidence that a thorow Reformation was not aimed at, nor intended at that Time.

10thly, Whereas 'tis complained of the Ministers of this Church, That they have not been faithful, as in former Days, in applying their Doctrine to, and testifying against, the Sins of the Times; and Separatists cite the Act of Assembly 1648, Sess. 26. for Proof hereof. Now, however groundless some of the former Complaints are, yet I fear there may be too much Ground for this; but then it cannot be laid to the Door of the Church of Scotland: For again and again she hath enjoined, that all her Ministers should be faithful and free in testifying against the Sins of the Land and Place they live in; as did the Assembly 1699, which recommended it "to all the Ministers of this Church, to be serious in holding forth to their People the hainous Sins of the Land, both of the former and present Times." So did the Assembly 1701, and so of other Assemblies. And as to the Act of Assembly 1648, tho' publick Sins and Defections are to be testified against in Sermons, yet, as I humbly think the main Current and Scope

of Application in Sermons should be how to bring lost Sinners to Christ the Saviour by unfeigned Faith, and to Conformity to his Image by real Sanctification and Holiness; so to have the main Current of Applications still running upon the Publick, as that *Act* seems to require, might be very unlike such worthy Men as Mr. *Livingstone*, who, in a Letter to his Parishoners of *Ancrum*, says, "Now, as
 " concerning the Condition of the Church and Work of
 " God in that Land, ye remember, that, altho' I shunned
 " not, according to my poor Measure, and as Occasion
 " offered, and Necessity required, to shew my Mind of
 " publick Matters, Dangers and Duties of the Time;
 " yet I used not very much to insist upon such Things, as
 " not being much inclined or able for disputing: And,
 " having found by frequent Experience, that so soon as
 " any were gained to close indeed with Christ, and lay Religion to Heart in Earnest, these generally, out of a native Principle, became presently sound in the Controversies of the Times."

Further, as here sundry may be guilty in many other Respects, so particularly I'm apt to think at this Day it may be the Fault of the Generality, even where there is Danger of Persons being led aside to Separation, that yet Ministers testify not against the Danger and Evil of this Sin. Tho' they own Division and Separation are threatening, and a just Cause of Fasting; yet, for fear of displeasing, they never open a Mouth to show People the hainous Evil thereof, tho' 'tis one of the sad Defections of our Day. And 'tis to be regretted sundry cannot hear a Word upon that Subject. I could name a Minister who, to impress his Audience with the Evil of this Sin, to which some really religious People may be inclined thro' Misinformation, only said, "However lightly some may think of Separation
 " from a true Church of Christ, yet still this hath been
 " reckoned a hainous Evil in the Eyes of the Lord's Servants." Citing the Words of some he thought would be less exceptionable, viz. the Words of the Reverend Mr. *MWard*, who says, "A Separation, when not upon
 " clear and just Ground, is a greater Sin before God, and
 " more wounding to the Heart of Christ, than either Murder or Adultery, &c.—— And whosoever shall be
 " found to plead for this, I dare affirm, he blows that Fire
 " with his Breath, which Christ would quench with his
 " Blood." And also citing the Words of Mr. *Alexander Shields*, who says, "It is indeed Ministers Duty to shew
 " People

" People how great a Sin Schism is, and that the Wrath
 " of God is not far off from them who make and cherish
 " sinful Separation." Tho' he had no Eye to any Mini-
 sters or any particular Persons in the World in citing these
 Words, and without speaking one Word whether or not
 he was one in Sentiments with those Authors upon that
 Head; yet for this he hath been heavily complained of
 by some. The reformed Church of *France*, as noticed al-
 ready, seeing the Evil and Danger of this Sin, enjoined her
 Ministers *mightily to insist upon the Evil hereof in their pu-
 blick Sermons and private Exhortations, even tho' they should
 meet with Contempt, Scorn and Reproach in the Discharge of
 this their Duty.* And if it be indeed Ministers Duty to shew
 People the Evil of this Sin, then I humbly think such Mi-
 nisters as are apprehensive of Peoples being in Danger, for
 the Exoneration of their Consciences are obliged to dis-
 cover the Evil thereof, whether People be pleased or dis-
 pleased.

11thly, Whereas 'tis complained, " The Church of Scot-
 " land neither at nor since the Revolution hath supplicated
 " the Civil Powers for having the Act *Rescissory*, and o-
 " ther Acts condemning our Covenants, rescinded; and an-
 " nient Laws, approving and injoining them to be taken
 " by all, restored, tho' under the Ashes of that Act *Re-
 " scissory* our Covenants were left buried." *Ans.* There
 were two Acts *Rescissory*, and which of them they mean I
 cannot tell. The first is, The Ninth Act of *Charles II.*
 his first Parliament, annulling what was done by the Par-
 liament 1649, and *Committees of Estates*, which were kept
 thereafter. The second was the Fifteenth Act of that same
 Parliament, whereby the Parliaments held in the Year
 1640, 1641, 1644, 1645, 1646, 1647 and 1648, and all
 Acts and Deeds done in them, were declared void and null.
 However neither of these Acts *Rescissory* make any express
 mention of our Covenants: And tho' the Deeds done by
 these Parliaments were declared void and null, yet it may
 be questioned, if by these the Covenants themselves were
 annulled; for these Acts might be interpreted, of their
 Acts and Deeds relating to the imposing of them. And as
 for other Acts, as the Fifth Act of the second Session of
 King *Charles II.* his first Parliament, intituled, *Act concer-
 ning the Declaration to be signed by all Persons in publick
 Trust*, by which they were to swear, " That the Covenants
 " are unlawful Oaths, and that there lies no Obligation
 " upon any of the Subjects from the said Oaths." And

also for the Third Act of the next Session of that Parliament, intituled, *Additional Act concerning the Declaration, &c.* which was an Act of the same Nature with the former in respect of our *Covenants National and Solemn League*; which *Additional Act* enjoined "all *Magistrates, Clerks and Members of Council in Burghs* should sign that *Declaration*." These Acts are both expressly rescinded by the Twenty seventh Act of King *William's* and Queen *Mary's* first Parliament. And also the Fifth Act of *James VII.* his first Parliament, by which it was declared to be Treason "to give or take the *National Covenant* as explained in 1638, or the *Solemn League*, or to write in Defence of them, or own them as lawful or obligatory upon themselves or others." This Act was also rescinded by the Twenty eighth Act of that second Session of the first Parliament of King *William* and Queen *Mary*: And many such bad Acts made in former Times were rescinded by that Parliament; as the Act of *Supremacy*, the Act for asserting the *Royal Prerogative*, the *Test Act*, and the like, which now I shall not insist upon. And further, as for the *Act* or *Acts Rescissory* made in the Reign of *Charles II.* tho' I'm far from approving them, yet there are Acts in some of these Parliaments which those *Acts Rescissory* rescinded, that many reckon bad Acts; as that in particular by which all are obliged to take the Covenant under all *Civil Powers*. And from the Consideration of the Badness of some of those Acts, perhaps, the Church of *Scotland* hath not applied for the rescinding the *Acts Rescissory*; and that our Parliament should declare all the Acts of those Parliaments obligatory, tho' they are far from approving the *Acts Rescissory* in general: And another Reason for not applying might be, They saw not any great Probability of getting their Petition granted, tho' it would certainly be very acceptable to them to see every Act which may be any way against the *Covenants* themselves rescinded.

12thly, 'Tis complained the Church of *Scotland* is defective at this Day, in not taking due Care that none be licensed to preach the Gospel but such as are of orthodox Principles, real Piety, and a Gospel-adorning Conversation, serious and truly religious Persons being discouraged, while the less tender are encouraged. *Answer.* I own there seems to be too much Ground for Complaint of many on this Account; yet 'tis not so with all: And whatever Ground there may be for Complaint in this Case, yet 'tis not the Fault of the Church of *Scotland*, as if she was defective in

not making good Acts and Regulations anent the licensing of Men to preach the Gospel; for I suppose neither this, nor any other Church, ever had better and stricter Rules as to this, than she hath at this Day: And for their Soundness in Principle, and blameless Conversation, all who are licensed to preach, they profess to be orthodox. And as all Presbyteries in their Bounds are ask'd openly in every Synod, if they know any Thing against the Candidates to be entered on Trials, either in Principle or Practice; so in some Places, after this is proposed, it must be half a Year before Answer is given by the Synod, that all may have full Time to enquire anent them. But as here seems to be *origo mali*, the Spring of all our Evils in the Church of Scotland, so I earnestly pray the Lord may prevent all Occasion of Complaint in Time coming, and give us all to take heed lest we license or lay Hands suddenly upon any, a corrupt Ministry being the worst of Plagues.

And, *Lastly*, 'Tis complained, Albeit of late many dangerous and destructive Errors have been broached, and greedily drunk in by not a few, yet no faithful Testimony hath been emitted against them by the Church of Scotland. *Answer* 1. As it cannot be denied many gross Errors have been spread of late in this Island, so an Act assertory of the Truths of God, in Opposition to these particular Errors, and a Warning against them by the Church of Scotland, might be very seasonable at this Day. Yet, 2. Tho' a more particular condemning of the Errors broached, and a particular asserting of the Truths controverted and denied, and also a more full Warning against Error may be needful, yet the Church of Scotland hath not been altogether negligent in these; for the General Assembly 1717 did prohibit and discharge *Professor Simson*, and all *Professors of Divinity, Ministers, Preachers, and all others* in this Church, to vent any Doctrines not agreeable to our *Confession of Faith and Catechisms*, "Especially such as ascribe too much to corrupt Nature; asserting that the undue exalting of Reason and Nature is always to the Disparagement of Revelation and efficacious free Grace." And as the Errors of his second Libel were condemned by the Assembly suspending him, so in 1729, in their Act against him they plainly, and in positive Terms, assert the proper *supreme Deity of the Son of God*, which was the great Thing denied. And, as was hinted before, not only the Synod of *Lothian*, but also the Commission of the General Assembly in 1733, testified against and condemned that little Book,

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intituled, *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism revised*, which favours the *Deistical, Arian, Socinian and Arminian* Schemes; and that *Commission* was approved by the subsequent Assembly. And it cannot be denied but the Act of Assembly 1736, anent *Preaching*, is an *Act assertory* of most of the great Truths which had been controverted.

3. Tho' this Church should think an *Act assertory* further needless, this Omission can be no sufficient Ground of Separation, seeing 'tis known the Church of Scotland adheres to her Standards, engaging her Members to them. Indeed if she should require us, as a Term of Communion, to profess our Belief of any Error, that would be Ground of Separation: For I doubt not the Truth of what the learned *Chillingworth* says in his *Vindication of the Church of England from the Charge of Schism*, upon the account of her Separation from the Church of Rome, p. 281, 282. where he puts the Question, *May a Church be left for Sin and Errors?* To which he answers, "No, if she don't impose and in-join them: But if she do as the *Roman* does, then we must forsake Men rather than God; leave the Church's Communion, rather than commit Sin, and profess known Errors to be Divine Truths. To say the Lord hath said so, when he hath not said so, is a great Sin, be the Matter never so small." However, an *Act assertory* might be needful for the further Vindication of Truth, and stopping the Mouths of Gainsayers.

14th *Object*. Many of the truly Godly have separated, or incline to Separation; and therefore it must be Duty. Can we but think such eminent Persons know the Mind of God better than others? This is a very frivolous Objection. Yet I Answer, 1. Tho' it may be true, yea, I doubt not there are sundry really religious who have separated, and others are inclined to separate from the Church of Scotland at this Day; yet I hope it will be owned there are others, and I hope a far larger Number of really Religious, who are of a different Mind from them. And, 2. 'Tis a weak Argument to say, A Number of truly Godly are for a Cause, therefore it must be right. At a Time *Joab* may look liker to know the Mind of God than *David*, as in the Case of numbring the People, 1 *Chron.* xxi. 3, 4, 6. where 'tis said of *Joab*, *The King's Word was abominable to him*. All Men being Liars, 'tis to the Law and to the Testimony their Walk must be brought and tried thereby. 3. People may be eminent for Piety, and have a great deal of experimental Knowledge as to practical Godliness, and yet be very in-

competent Judges of sundry controverted Points: And the Affair of Separation from a Church of Christ, is not such an easy Business to understand as many fancy. *Paul* must be followed no further than he follows Christ. Many Times serious People have followed others, when not able to give a Reason of their Hope. It is a good Saying of the Reverend Mr. *Halyburton*, namely, "That, in consulting with others for Light, Regard would be had to the different Talents of Men. ——— In Matters of Government, most Regard should be had to these whom the Lord hath fitted that Way." And surely the Judgment of *Durham*, and other judicious Divines which have been mentioned in this Essay, are far more to be regarded than the Authority of many who cannot be supposed to be so seen into Controversy, be their Piety what it will.

Peter and *Barnabas*, eminent Apostles, may sometimes, in direct Opposition to their former Practice, set up for greater Strictness, so as to separate from the *Gentile* Converts, contrary to the Laws of Christ and Love, leading away many with them, *Gal. ii.* 'Tis the *Lamb of God*, the adorable Forerunner, whom we are only to follow whithersoever he goeth. As *Zanchy* said, *Si Luthero vel Calvino, tribuas quod non potuerant errare Idola tibi fingis.* 'Tis an Idolizing of Men to look on them as infallible.

15th Object. There are many Things in the Conduct of Ministers we cannot but testify against, and know not how to give Testimony but by separating from them. Answer. I frankly own there are many Things among us which call for Reformation; and O that He with whom the *Residue of the Spirit is*, would pour out of his holy Spirit for that Effect! But Separation, as to me 'tis contrary to God's Word, so it was never the Practice of the Saints in former Days, where the Essentials of a true Church were continued, and no sinful Term of Communion required: So this is what the Lord never required at the Hands of his People. And what the Reverend Mr. *M. Ward* says in his above-cited Letter is of Weight here, where he affirms, "It is a Delusion to think that it is the only Way to testify against what I judge amiss in the Minister, to cast at his Ministry, and to withdraw from him. Whosoever adops this Principle, and practises it accordingly, hath not the Mind of Christ; for there are other patent and obvious Ways to witness against all the Evil of our Ways besides these: Nay, this Way of witnessing is such as Christ will witness against it, as not the Way." For

For People may lay such wrong Steps before Church-officers; and, tho' they be not heard, this, in my Opinion, will be a Testimony against them, as also an Exoneration of themselves; and so they may let the Matter rest. And both *Durham* and *Boston* speak to this same Purpose, as hath been shown on the third Chapter.

16th *Object*. Tho' Separation from a Church is not a light Thing, yet, say some, we have Impressions the Lord is calling us at this Day to separate from this Church. Now, this Objection is of so little Weight, that 'tis scarcely worth the noticing: Yet I answer, *Impressions* are not our Bible, and sometimes serious People have been deceived by them; therefore they ought to examine such Impressions by the Rule and Touch-stone of God's infallible Word. *Durham*, speaking of the Strength of a Temptation to keep up Division, says *, " Sometimes there may be a Perswasion very satisfying to the Party, when it is not from God; this was in *Galatia*, Chap. v. Ver. 8. it is like on both Sides, even when they were biting and devouring one another." The above-mentioned Author of *The Church of Scotland's Grievances* speaks well to this Purpose, saying, " It is the Scriptures of Truth, and not our Impressions, which are to be the Standard of Duty; To the Law and to the Testimony, &c. And we are to try the Spirits, lest Satan (as certainly he is) be the Author of these Impressions; who not rarely transforms himself into an Angel of Light, by which Means he presents Duty to the Soul attired with the ugly Dress of Sin and Impiety, while, at the same Time, he busks up Sin with all the Baits and enticing Allurements of an apparent Zeal for God, and a seeming Regard to his Glory." And, as the Reverend Mr. *Boston* says †, " In your waiting for Light, whatever the sovereign Lord may do, do not you look for Impressions, far less for Voices nor extraordinary Revelations, any Manner of Way to discover your Duty in particular Cases, 2 Pet. i. 18, 19."

17th *Object*. Many Ministers, instead of testifying against the Defections of this apostate Church themselves, and joining the Testimony, condemn such as of late, by their *Act*, *Declaration* and *Testimony*, have given honest Testimony against them; and therefore such, at least, ought to be separated from. *Answe*. 1. I own 'tis Duty for Ministers to give a faithful and honest Testimony against Defections; but

* On *Scand.* Part 4. Chap. 5. P. 292. † On the *Cre*
P. 455.

but then they ought to be sure they are really Defections they testify against, and to beware lest they charge Sin upon a Church of which she is not guilty. 2. Tho' some should not see it Duty to join in such or such Testimonies, that is not Ground of Separation: For, as Mr. *Shields*, in a Letter from *Holland* to a Friend anent the *Queensferry Paper*, says II, "I cannot but have Exceptions against some Parts of the Paper (the *Queensferry Covenant*) particularly the prescribing a Form of Government stinted to the judicial Law. — I do not love to be censorious, especially where the Scope is to engage to Faithfulness and Zeal; but I cannot assent to the End of the sixth Paragraph, which to me seems too near Separation, declaring, That any unfuitable Deportment of Ministers, or their not joining with their Brethren in the publick Testimony, is a sufficient Ground of withdrawing from them: This (adds he) is not the Principle nor Practice of the Church of Scotland." And in that Letter he affirms, The Church of Scotland never founded Separation on personal Misdemeanours or Faintings upon a special Occurrence. 3. As there are Cases in which publick Testimonies are to be given; so sometimes the Lord may approve of his Servants, when they only guard against complying with the Defections of the Day in which they live: Hence Mr. *Hog*, in his formerly cited Letter to a Friend, when giving some Notes of a Sermon he preached in 1733, says, "Sundry of the better Sort among us are prone to think that Testimonies are of no Value, without that they be carried to great Heights. Hence I pointed them to a notable Instance we have upon Record concerning *Joseph of Arimathea*, to whom the Spirit of God hath given a great Character, *Luke xxiii. 50, 51*. He was a good Man and just, he consented not to the horrid Deed of the Murderers of our Lord. Some of Note in our Day would have said, That was not enough, he ought to have made a more resolute Appearance; but we read not that the Lord said so. In several Cases the Current may be so very strong, that there's Access for no more than thro' Grace to guard against the being carried down with it; *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil, Exod. xxiii. 2.*" 4. As publick Testimonies are to be faithful and free; so likewise they ought to be full, and given against the Sins of one Period of the Church as well as against another Period thereof: And I cannot see how it hath consisted with the

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Brethrens Faithfulness in their Testimonies, that they have only noticed the Faults, Failings and Transgressions of the Church of Scotland since 1650, and never mention one of the Failings of the Church of Scotland from 1638 to that Year; her good Acts in that reforming Time could not make Atonement for the bad Acts of that Period. And, that none may think this a Calumny to speak of her bad Acts here, I'll instance some of these which ought to been testified against: And, 1. Why have they not testified against the Act of Assembly 1638, which approves of the seeking Presentations upon Supposition the Presbytery's Advice be had? 2. Their Act restricting Ministerial Freedom †, by charging all under Pain of Censure to speak or write against that Assembly, or any Act of that Assembly. 3. The Act of Assembly 1639 ‖, in which, having approved of the National Covenant in all the Heads and Clauses thereof, and appointed it to be subscribed by all Persons suspected of Papistry or any other Error, &c. and by all the Members of this Kirk and Kingdom; they supplicate his Majesty's High Commissioner, and the honourable Estates of Parliament, to ratify and injoin the same under all Civil Pains; which beyond peradventure occasioned much Perjury and False-swearing in this Land. 4. The Act of Assembly 1640 *, which ordained, That no Expectant should have a Liberty to reside within a Burgh, University or College, which did not subscribe the Covenant; which was a Civil Penalty they had no Power to inflict. 5. Their Act 1642 †, robbing the People of all Right to elect their Elders and Deacons. 6. Their Act †, whereby they obliged all Presbyteries to give a List of six Persons to the Patron, who were to be Men willing to accept of his Presentation, that he might take his Choice of them. 7. The Act of the same Assembly ‖. And again the Act of Assembly 1644, injoining Presbyteries to proceed against Non-communicants, whether Papists or others, according to the Act of Parliament made thereanent; which tended to the Profanation of that Ordinance. 8. That Act of Assembly 1647, which discharges Fellowship-meetings. 9. The Act of that Assembly, which makes the subscribing the League and Covenant a Term of Christian Communion; so that all Persons without Exception were obliged to subscribe it before their first receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 10. That Act of Assembly 1648, which obliges

† Old Acts, P. 51. ‖ P. 87. * P. 94. † P. 114. ‡ P. 116. ‖ P. 120, 244.

obliges all young Students at their first Entry to the College to take the Covenant, which many young Boys were surely unfit for. And, 11. The Church of *Scotland* in that former Period appointed no Fasts in 1638, 1639, 1640, 1641; and when they appointed one in 1642, instead of searching out and mentioning the Sins of former Times, in which the *Supremacy* and as many gross Abominations had been committed as in any Period since, yet in their Causes of Fasting at that Time they mention not so much as one of the Sins of former Times, and all the Sins of their own Times which they speak of, are contained in less than three Lines. And, 12. Without insisting further on Particulars of this Kind, there is the Act or *Directory* of Assembly 1649, which robs the People of their Right to elect their Pastors so far, that they had not the Choice of any of the Persons to be upon the List for Ministers, in regard by that Act the Elders only had both the Nomination and Election: Tho' the People had a Negative upon them, yet they might never have the Person they most inclined to have, if but Four of Seven, Five of Nine, or Six of Eleven Elders should be against the whole Parish. And so of other Acts and Decisions in that Period which cannot be justified, sundry of which have been mentioned in this Performance. And here the Words of *Rutherford's dying Testimony*, cited P. 96. may be considered, and let the World see whether their Testimony be full or not; and had they given a full Testimony, it would have taken away the Suspicion I find sundry have, that their Design in this Testimony is in a great Part to please Separatists, and blacken the present Church of *Scotland*, occasioning Separation from her, as being a vile apostate whorish Church, from what the Church of *Scotland* was from 1638 to 1649. And surely, if we be called to search out and mourn over all the Sins, Faults and Failings of the Church of *Scotland* since 1650, then, as hinted formerly, no Reason can be given why we search not out, mourn over, and testify against the open Sins of the Church of *Scotland* for twelve Years further back.

The Brethren, in their 2d *Testimony*, as was noticed already, say, "They receive, acknowledge and approve of
" all the Acts of Assemblies from 1638 to 1650, and since
" that Time, in as far as they were past for advancing
" and carrying on a covenanted Reformation, agreeable to
" the Word of God, and the received Principles and Con-
" stitutions of this Church." But I cannot think they
can approve of all the above-mentioned and sundry other

such Acts in those Times. And it might be the Fault even of the *Protesters*, that in their *Propositions for Peace and Agreement* with the *Resolutioners* offered to 'em, July 21, 1652. that they required of them, " They give Evidence and " Assurance that they approve of, and will adhere to, all " the Acts of the uncontroverted Assemblies of this Church " concerning the Work of Reformation, in the literal and " genuine Sense and Meaning thereof." Now if it be Truth, which is positively asserted by the *Brethren* in the 10th Page, when speaking of repealing the Act 1732, and again in the 37th Page of their *Reasons of not acceding to the Judicatories of this Church*, when complaining, that the Act of Assembly 1733, anent *Ministerial Freedom*, is not rescinded, namely, " That nothing less than an explicate formal Repeal of an iniquous Statute is necessary, for the " Reparation of the Dishonour done to the great Head of " the Church by enacting of it ; " And if, as they say in their 2d Testimony, P. 110. " 'Tis not any Apology for a " sinful Act or Decision, whereby a Church is involved in " the Guilt of transgressing the Ordinances and Institutions " of the Lord, that there is a Connivance at the contrary " Practice ; " Then the Brethren should consider whether they have been faithful in not complaining of such bad Acts between 1638 and 1650, nor lamented that they have not been rescinded. And it may not be improper for them explicitly, and by a formal Repeal of such Acts, to endeavour the Reparation of the Dishonour done to the great Head of the Church, tho', for so doing, the Followers of Mr. *McMillan*, and other *Separatists*, should be never so much displeased ; the Honour of Christ, the Head, is to be consulted before the Favour of the whole Creation. If, as I am told, the Brethrens Apology for not going further back in their *Testimony* than the publick *Resolutions* in 1650, is this, That the Sins of the Nation preceeding that Time were particularly acknowledged and testified against by the Church in the publick *Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties*, drawn up by the *Commission* 1648, then this is no Excuse at all ; for in all that publick *Acknowledgment of Sins* there is no particular Mention of the Sins preceeding 1638, nor of the many Faults the Church was guilty of by the bad Acts made from that Time to the drawing up of this *Acknowledgment*, nor of the Sin of the Church of Scotland, when the Estates of the Kingdom desired the General Assembly 1649 to determine who should be the Callers of Gospel Ministers, that they gave the Election only to the

Elders,

Elders, leaving nothing but Consent to the People, which I doubt not the Brethren do condemn.

Again, our Brethren are defective in their *Testimony*, in regard they never give the least *Testimony* against Division or Separation, which hath always been reckoned among the heaviest of Plagues which can befall the Church of Christ; never one Word of *Testimony* against, Complaint of, or Lamentation over them, who, contrary to the Covenants, have lived in a divided and separated State from the Church of Scotland since the *Revolution*, which Mr. Webster calls, *the most scandalous Schism that ever perhaps was known*; never a Word of these *Separatists* their disowning the Government, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical. And in this our Brethren are very unlike these worthy *protesting Brethren* in the Synod of Fife and Perth, who in their *Testimony*, of the Date October 1658, do testify, as against *Atheism, Antiscripturism, Arianism, Scepticism, Socinianism, Popery, Pelagianism, Arminianism, Antinomianism, Libertinism, Anabaptism, Erastianism, Prelacy, Independency*; so also, once and again, they testify against *Separatism*, P. m. 27, 37. And, when testifying against the *Toleration* in these Times, they lament and regrete, P. 36. "That thereby, instead of Reformation, they shall have Deformation; instead of the Power of Godliness, they shall have vain Janglings; instead of Love, bitter Heart-burnings and Jealousies; instead of Union, Schism and Division; instead of Peace, Contention and Strife; instead of Order and Government, Anarchy and Confusion." And surely, the unwarrantable Separation of sundry since the *Revolution*, and in our Day, is one of the lamentable Defections which ought to be testified against. And if, as I am pretty sure, this was once in the *Testimony*, but dashed out for fear of offending those *Separatists*, then the *Brethren* are the more inexcusable, and guilty of acting from what they call *political Considerations* in the Assemblies 1734 and 1735, 2 *Test.* P. 7 and 8.

Further, in the Esteem of *Separatists*, they must be very defective and unfaithful, in regard they give no *Testimony* against what these call *the sinful unlimited Oath of Allegiance*, which was appointed to be taken, say they, instead of all former Oaths*. Again, *Separatists* may think them defective, alledging nothing but the Fear of Man hath kept them from testifying against the Non-observance of that Act of Parliament 1649. whereby the Sovereign was obliged, before he could be admitted to the Exercise of his Royal Power,

Power, to assure and declare, by his solemn Oath under his Hand and Seal, his Allowance of the National Covenant, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, &c. seeing they transcribe eighteen or nineteen Lines of this Act in their Testimony, P. 22. giving it the Epithet of *Laudible*; but, instead of being laudible, it seems to be a very bad Act, as may be shewn afterwards.

5thly, Testimonies are to be plain; so I think our Brethren have been faulty here, seeing it cannot be thought but 'tis partly the Design of their Testimony, to make Ministers and People separate from this National Church, and join them. Why, then, have they not testified against joining with her? and why have they not been so free in their *Act*, *Declaration* and *Testimony*, as to tell in plain Terms, That this is the Duty of Ministers and People to make a Secession with them? Should they not been as plain, at least, as the Reverend Mr. *Erskine*, in his Letter to the Presbytery of *Stirling*, in which he says, *No doubt worldly Interest gives a strong Bias against this Motion, viz. the Motion of faithful Ministers their coming out to them, and leaving the established Church?* Or, might they not been as plain as the Reverend Mr. *Mair*, in his *Declaration of Secession*, in which he says, *The Tabernacle is now removed without the Camp?* which is upon the Matter to say, This National Church is no Church of Christ, no Church that he can own; which seems to be as much as to say, Her Members are in Conscience obliged to separate from her, and go out to the Brethren, who are without the Camp. And whereas there he says, "The Warning is awful against refusing to come out to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty;" where surely he hath an Eye to what is said, *Judges v. 23. Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the Help of the Lord, to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty.* Whatever our Brother may think, the Words of the Psalmist, *Psal. cxxv. 5.* cited by Mr. *Hog* (in his Letter, of the Date *March 12. 1733.*) against Separatists, may be no less pertinent and awful, *But as for such as turn aside after their crooked Ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the Workers of Iniquity, but Peace shall be upon Israel;* tho' I'm far from making Application of them to our Brethren. And further, why have they not been as plain for Separation in the *Testimony*, as now they are said to be in their Sermons? And why have they not told what are the many valuable Pieces of Reformation this Church

and Land had once attained, which they affirm, P. 60. "were upon the Matter given up at the *Revolution*:" Here *implicite Faith* must take Place; for my Part, I cannot guess at them. And why have they not told what are the *ABs* for Reformation to which they adhere, and so of many other Things of the like Nature?

6thly, Things disputed among the truly Godly, Learned and Tender, have not been thought so proper Matter for a publick Testimony; and it cannot be refused the *publick Resolutions*, *Indulgence* and *Toleration* were such; and of this Nature also was the *Abjuration*, even in its first Draught. And what *Colforgie* says of this Oath, in his *Grievances of the Church of Scotland considered*, is applicable to all these, when he expresseth himself thus; "Every Person who knows what warm Reasonings have been advanced *pro* and *con*, must own it to be a disputable Point. And, *addo* *be*, we find, that the primitive Church looked upon the forcing a Belief in a Point of this Nature as Cruelty and Tyranny, and that the Imposers of such an Assent were esteemed Violaters of the Church's Concord."

7thly, Such as emit publick Testimonies against a Church, ought to be very sure they say nothing but Truth: But our Brethren, in their *Testimonies*, have published sundry Things which are not Matter of Fact; as particularly, second *Testimony* P. 51. where, complaining of the Church of Scotland at the Revolution for some Omissions, and accusing her as being most unlike to former reforming Times; to blacken her, they say, "It was the laudible Practice in reforming Times to condemn all Steps of Defection, and duly to censure such as were guilty of publick Backslidings. Accordingly, by the Assembly that met *Anno* 1638, all the Prelates, being Ringleaders in the Apostasy, were deposed, and some of them excommunicate: Also, in the said reforming Period, they returned to the Lord by a particular Acknowledgment and Confession of the Sins of the Ministry and of the whole Land.—— But the General Assembly that met in the Year 1690 made no particular Acknowledgment of the many heinous Backslidings of the former Period: But, on the contrary, when many lamentable Steps of Defection and Apostasy were complained of in a *large Paper* offered to the foresaid Assembly 1690 by Mr. *Alexander Shields*, &c."

Now, in those few Lines five or six Things are asserted which are not Matter of Fact: As, 1. Tho' tis certain all Steps

Steps of Defection ought to be condemned, yet 'tis not Fact to say, *In reforming Times it has been the laudible Practice to condemn all Steps of Defection*; for in 1638, which is granted to be a special reforming Time, they do not condemn the *Supremacy*, nor make they any particular Confession of many other Steps of Defection whereof the Church had been guilty in the immediately preceeding Period, as hath been shown already. 2. 'Tis a Mistake to say, *They censured such as were guilty of publick Backsliding*; for there was no Censure inflicted upon any of the Clergy for their former complying with *Prelacy*, and taking the *Oaths, &c.* except only the Bishops. 3. 'Tis a Mistake to say, as here and also P. 18. *All the Bishops were deposed*; for Bishops *Lindsay* and *Abernetby* were only suspended from the Ministry. 4. 'Tis a Mistake to say, *In that Period they returned to the Lord by a particular Acknowledgment and Confession of the Sins of the Ministry and of the whole Land*: For, as in that Period they had no publick Fast, with particular Confession of Sins, till 1642; so, even at that Time, they were nothing so particular in confessing the Sins of the Ministry or People, as was the Assembly 1690: And, in 1646, when the Sins of Ministers are mentioned, there is no particular Mention of their complying with *Prelacy*, taking of sinful Oaths, &c. in former Times; and so of many other Sins whereof sundry had been guilty. And 'tis a 5th Mistake to say, *The General Assembly 1690 made no particular Acknowledgment of the many bainous Backslidings of the former Period*, asserting to the same Purpose P. 9. for the contrary is evident to a Demonstration from looking into their Act for a National Fast, and by considering what is said on the 9th Particular in the foregoing 13th Objection. Had the Brethren said, that Assembly did not make a full particular Acknowledgment of those Backslidings, that could not been quarrelled; but to say, *They made no particular Acknowledgment of the many bainous Backslidings in the former Period*, is injurious to the Memory of our worthy Ancestors who lived at the happy Revolution: For the Sins particularized in that Act for a Fast are surely some of the many, yea, the most of the many Sins of the former Period; and, if I mistake not, never was any Act more particular since the Reformation. Again, 6. 'Tis a Mistake in them to say, as in the same Place, That, "when Mr. *Shields* and "other two Ministers offered to that Assembly a large Paper, complaining of the many lamentable Steps of Defection and Apostasy, the Assembly was so far from at-

"tempting

it tempting the Redress of the Grievances complained of, that they called them unseasonable and impracticable Proposals, uncharitable and injurious Reflections, tending rather to kindle Contentions than to compose Divisions; For the Assembly, speaking of that Paper, only says, "It contains several peremptory and gross Mistakes, unseasonable and impracticable Proposals, &c." They do not call the several Steps of Defection mentioned in that Paper uncharitable and injurious Reflections, &c. No; for sundry Things in it are expressly mentioned by that Assembly as Causes of Fasting: And, in speaking of that Paper of Complaints, they speak not of it in general, as the Brethrens Testimony represents; for the Assembly's Committee, in their Report anent it, own expressly that it hath several good Things in it, tho' they affirm it contains several unseasonable and impracticable Proposals: They speak not of it indefinitely, as if it had contained nothing but such; for the Assembly might reckon several of the Proposals in it unseasonable and impracticable, while yet they approved of other Things contained therein.

18th Object. The Apostle expressly requires us to separate from an unclean or impure Church, 2 Cor. vi. 17. *Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing.* This is the great Argument in every one's Mouth almost who plead for Separation from the Church of Scotland at this Day: But it was not Separation from the Church of Corinth the Apostle called the believing *Corinthians* unto, but Separation from the Idol-tables of the *Gentiles*, at which some of the Church of Corinth, being invited by their *Gentile* Neighbours, did eat and feast, to the great Offence of others. It is no just Inference, because they were to separate from eating at the Idols Table, or from eating Meat when told it had been offered to Idols, therefore they were to separate from the Church of Corinth.

Rutherford *, in Answer to the Objection, says, "This Separation in Corinth was in a Church from the Idolatry in it; which Separation we allow, but not a Separation out of a Church, else the Words would bear, that Paul will have them to forsake the Church of Corinth for idolatrous Tables in it, and set up a new Church of their own; which the Separatists dare not say, and is contrary to other Places, 1 Cor. v. 4. 1 Cor. xi. 1 Cor. xiv. where

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" he

* Peace. Plea, p. 130. See also his *Due Right*, p. 232, 233, 234, 235.

" he commands and allows their Meetings and publick
 " Church-communion: Therefore this Place proves not
 " their Point. ——— What Logick is this? Separate from
 " Idols, *ergo* separate from a Church where the true Wor-
 " ship of God is professed and taught." And Mr. *Shields* †,
 commenting on this Scripture, says, " It is very much a-
 " bused, if it be offered to any such Thing as that we must
 " come out from among the Ministers, and be separated
 " from them: For (1.) This Separation here commanded
 " is from Infidels, Unrighteousness, Darkness, *Belial*, Idols.
 " The *Corinthians* did very ill in eating and sitting at the
 " Idols Tables of the *Gentiles*, which gave great Offence
 " to the Weak, 1 *Cor.* x. 17, 20. ——— (2.) This was not
 " a Separation from the Church of *Corinth*, nor from the
 " Ministers thereof; tho' there were many Corruptions en-
 " tertained among them, yet they were to have Commu-
 " nion in publick Ordinances, as is proved above: Only it
 " is a Separation from the Idolatry in it. There may be a
 " Separation from the Corruptions of a Church, very well
 " consistent with abiding in the Communion of that
 " Church." And to the same Purpose speak *Calvin* and
Durham, and all sound Commentators on the Place. And
 indeed, if Separation was enjoined from the Church of *Co-*
rinth in this Text, then the Apostle would be directly con-
 trary to himself in what he writes to the *Corinthians* in o-
 ther Places, as 1 *Cor.* i. 10. And this is evident likewise
 from what the Apostle writes in the same Second Epistle,
 Chap. xii. 20. and, Chap. xiii. 11, 12. in the Close of that
 Epistle, where he says, *Finally, Brethren, farewell! : Be of one*
Mind, live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace shall be
with you. Greet one another with a holy Kiss.

19th Object. The Apostle enjoins Separation, 1 *Cor.* i. 11.
 saying, *But now I have written unto you, not to keep Company,*
if any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or coe-
lous, or an Idolater, or a Raiser, or a Drunkard, or an Ex-
ortioner, with such an one no not to eat. This Scripture,
 say some, requires us at least to separate in the Sacrament
 of the Lord's Supper from such as are vicious and scanda-
 lous: But I humbly think that Scripture is only meant of
 a civil Eating, or of entertaining intimate Familiarity with
 such as are scandalous in Conversation, and not of a sacred
 religious Eating at a Communion-table. This appears from
 the Context: The Eating there forbidden with a Brother,
 is allowed with a Heathen. I know some solid Divines, as
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the Reverend Mr. *Gillispie*, plead, That this is meant even of a religious Eating at a Communion-table with Persons excommunicated for scandalous Practices, as all scandalous Persons ought to be from the Lord's Table; and he cites *Beza*, *Bullinger*, and others, as being of this Mind: Yet, says he, "As they (*to wit, these Divines*) conceive that Text does not at all justify, but rather condemn private Christians their separating from the Church because of a Mixture of scandalous Persons." The Eating here forbidden is for the Punishment of the guilty, not of the guiltless; but, if religious Eating at the Lord's Table was forbidden, the greatest Punishment would fall upon the Innocent. And what *Durham* speaks, near the Close of his first Lecture upon *Revelation* xviii. is an Answer to this, and also to the foregoing Objection; where he says, "It is one Thing to withdraw from civil Conversing with particular wicked Men, and another Thing to separate from God's Church for its Defects. There is therefore this observable in separating and withdrawing, That we are to keep less Fellowship in civil Things with a Brother that is a Church-member and is gross, than with one that is without and not a Member; as the Apostle writes, 2 Cor. v. 10. But we may and should, on the other Side, keep Church-fellowship with a true Church, tho' in many Things faulty and corrupt, whereas we may not at all with an idolatrous Company in their Worship. Hence, in that same Epistle to the *Corinthians*, going to and eating in Idols Temples, or at their Feasts, was so much condemned; yet communicating with the Church of *Corinth*, or living as a Member of it (tho' corrupt both in Doctrine and Practice) was never found Fault with as to Worship: For it is clear that that of not eating with an offending Brother looketh only to civil Fellowship, because it is such a Fellowship that is condemned with them, as is allowed to Heathens, which certainly is such. If our Churches therefore be Christ's Churches, as sometimes the Favourers of Separation grant, there can be no Separation from them without turning to a Schism." And so, according to *Durham*, our Brethren are guilty of the Sin of Schism, which is so plainly condemned in Scripture, and sworn against in our Covenants. Mr. *S Shields* affirms, Tho' the Church of *Corinth* had many Corruptions in their Practice, yet no Separation is enjoined from it.

20th Object. The Apostle, *Rom.* xvi. 17. commands us to mark them that cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the

Dollrine ye have learned; and avoid them: And, seeing the Ministers of the Church of Scotland have caused Divisions by their Untenderness, therefore they ought to be separated from. And our Brethren having owned their present Situation in Providence, considered abstractly from the Word, could not be their Rule of Duty; they adduce a twofold Scripture for proving the Lawfulness of their Se-cession: And one would think they should be very plain Scriptures, seeing so much is to be built upon them. Now this, *Rom. xvi. 17.* is the first of them; and, having adduced it for that Purpose, and instanced sundry Things which they affirm they have learned from their Forefathers, in a Consistency with the Word of God, which being counter-acted or denied by the Majority of this Church, they say, *1st Test. p. 89, 91.* "This we judge warrants us in our Se-cession from Ministerial Communion with them, which is the only Way we have now left us to avoid them." But there is one Thing, and it is a main Thing, they learned from our Forefathers, which they neglect to tell, namely, That their worthy Forefathers, who counted not their Life dear to them, so they might finish their Course with Joy, and the Ministry they had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify, or give faithful Testimony to the Grace of God, by their Practice and Writings; they still condemned Separation from a true Church of Christ, tho' her Faults and Failings were greater than any Thing that can be proven against their Mother-church at this Time. They still taught, that Testimonies against the Defections of the Church, while no sinful Terms of Communion were required, are to be given in a Way of Church-communion, as hath been noticed above.

And whereas the Brethren say, *p. 92.* "Where a Church declines the pure Ways of the Lord, it is the Duty of them that would be found faithful, to stand and ask for the old Paths, where the good Way is, and to walk therein," citing *Jer. vi. 16.* So, could they said we have learned from our Forefathers, that where such and such Things are to be found in our Mother-church, or in any true Church, we ought to separate from her; indeed that had been to the Purpose: But this they could not. Further, what Mr. *Shields* says in Answer to this Objection is of Weight, where he expresses himself thus ||; "That Scripture, *Rom. xvi. 17.* doth not command us to avoid every one that causeth

" causeth Divisions and Offences *occasionally* and *passively*,
 " by giving the first Rise to Divisions by offensive Courses;
 " for that way Divisions may be caused by Infirmities and
 " a Man's using his own Light, and by the Offence of o-
 " thers, whom upon that Account to avoid, were contra-
 " ry to the same Apostle's Doctrine in that same Epistle,
 " Chap. xiv. and xv. But it commands us to avoid them
 " which cause Divisions and Offences *actively*, *designedly*
 " and *purposely*, and do promote and abet a downright
 " Schism, and will not be perswaded to let Divisions fall,
 " tho' it may be done without Prejudice to Truth. —
 " Next, To *avoid*, there, is the same with the Duty of tur-
 " ning away, 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. extended there to Self-lovers,
 " Covetous, Proud, Unholy, *having a Form of Godliness*
 " without the Power. This cannot be interpreted always
 " and only of withdrawing from Church-communion; for
 " then we must withdraw from all that are Self-lovers, from
 " all that are Unholy, from all that are Hypocrites, which
 " none will affirm: But we may avoid Men several other
 " Ways, by withdrawing from personal Communion with
 " them, or familiar Converse, and from Communion in
 " their corrupt Designs and Courses." And the Context
 shows the Apostle is speaking against Offences arising from
 Division and want of brotherly Kindness; for in the imme-
 diately preceeding Verse he exhorts to *salute one another with*
a holy Kiss, to evidence their Christian Love and Unity,
 thereby telling the believing *Romans*, *the Churches of Christ*
saluted them. And this is manifest from the Consideration
 of the Doctrine he had taught them in the foregoing 12,
 13, 14 and 15 Chapters, which was the Doctrine they had
 learned. Further, 'tis evident from the Context this Scrip-
 ture is meant of such as cause Divisions, by using Argu-
 ments, exciting People to separate from the Church, pre-
 tending to greater Strictness, using *good Words and fair*
Speeches to deceive, and *whereewith they deceive the Hearts of*
simple Persons, as in the following 18 V. whereby they oc-
 casion a causeless Separation from their Brethren: And in-
 deed we ought to mark such, so as to point out the Evil
 of their Practice, and so as to keep a watchful Eye upon
 them and avoid them, lest we or others be seduced or in-
 fected by them, while with their *good Words and fair*
Speeches they pretend great Zeal for Christ and his Cause.
 And 'tis said there are some such in our Day, who go about
 seeking, *with good Words and fair Speeches*, to deceive seri-
 ous People, who are in Danger of believing every Thing

to be right which looks like greater Strictness, when urged by such as they reckon good and godly, setting up for Reformation.

21st Object. The Apostle commands us to withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly, 2 *Thess.* iii. 6. Now this is the second of these two Scriptures the Brethren insist upon to prove the Lawfulness of their *Secession*. But there is as little Weight in this as in the former: For it would be considered, the Apostle is not speaking of withdrawing from Ministers, these are not the Persons intended; but that Scripture is meant of a Withdrawing from such Professors as are of disorderly Conversation, and particularly of such as spent their Time in Idleness, working not at all, but, being busy Bodies, went about from Place to Place, or from House to House, mispending precious Time, to the Reproach of Religion. These were the Persons the Apostle exhorts to withdraw from, as is evident from the Context. And the learned *Voetius* thinks this Scripture is meant of a Civil and not an Ecclesiastical Withdrawing; a Withdrawing so as to have no familiar Converse with them. And the Meaning, according to *Diodati*, is, "To abstain from all voluntary, open and pleasing Conversation, and Communication with scandalous Persons, which sheweth a Delight or Likeness of Behaviour, and nourisheth and fomenteth Vice, and bringeth Danger of Contagion." And the Continuator of *Henry's Commentaries* says, "The Apostle gives Commands and Directions, with Relation to such as were idle Persons and busy Bodies, how they ought to behave, and how the Church should carry it towards them." Mr. *Shields* on *Church-communication*, p. 58. in Answer to this Argument for Separation, says, "The disorderly Brethren there spoken of, are the busy Bodies that work not at all, v. 11.—So that it is not meant of Ministers literally, tho' it may be transferred to Ministers by Analogy; where they do not work in Preaching, they are to be withdrawn from after the Church's Sentence." And afterwards, p. 61. he says, "The Place will not prove that we must withdraw from all Ministers guilty of offensive Disorders, &c." Now, these two being the only Scriptures our Brethren insist upon, tho' they say they might adduce many other Places of Scripture, as 1 *Tim.* vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. *Tit.* iii. 10. second Epistle of *John*, ver. 10. which Scriptures say nothing to the Purpose; To me this is a clear Evidence of the Weakness of their Cause; seeing, as was noticed, they own their Situation in

Providence with Reference to this Church, considered abstractly from the Word, cannot be the Rule of their Duty. Surely, could they have adduced a plainer Scripture in all the Word of God than those, they had not omitted it, the Lord's Word being *the only Rule of Faith and Obedience, the only Rule to direct us how to glorify God*, and come to the Enjoyment of him; the *Judge to which the Church of Christ is finally to appeal in all Controversies of Religion*. If People love not to walk by the *implicite Faith of Romanists*, they will require some plainer Scriptures for founding their separating Practice upon, than these adduced by our Brethren.

22d Object. The Church of Scotland since the Revolution, instead of justifying and approving the Testimonies, Witnessings, Wrestlings and Sufferings of the Lord's Servants in the late Times of Persecution, hath been guilty of an unparalleled Disregarding, and, as it would seem, of an industrious Slighting of them since the Revolution; as is evident, say Separatists, from a *publick History* written by Mr. Woodrow, in which he seems to have been an indirect Approver and Vindicator of the cruel Treatment the Sufferers met with *. And also the Reverend Messieurs Ralph Erskine and Thomas Mair, in their Representation to the Commission 1736. So the Brethren again and again, in their first Testimony, p. 35. and in their second Testimony, p. 9. and p. 52. they complain of this, viz. that the Wrestlings and Testimonies of Sufferers in the late Times have not been justified.

Now, concerning these Sufferers, their Trials, Treatment and Witnessings, 1. I own the cruel Severities and Persecutions they were put to, are just Grounds of Mourning; alas that our Land was thus defiled with Blood, and that the precious Blood of God's dear Saints! 2. Concerning these Sufferers who were enabled to resist unto Blood, I doubt not but as they were crowned with Martyrdom for Christ upon Earth, so now they have received the Crown of Life; and having washen their Robes and made them white, not in their own Blood, but in the Blood of the Lamb, they are with him before the Throne, and shall reign for ever in Glory. 3. Tho' a great Regard is due to the dying Speeches of Christians, and especially of dying Martyrs; yet their dying Speeches and Testimonies are not our Bible: 'Tis to the Law and Testimony of the unerring Spirit, speaking in the Scripture, and not to any human Testimonies, we are to look for Light and Direction

* *Plain Reasons*, p. 130.

tion. For, as that worthy Martyr Mr. *Walter Smith* said in his last *Speech*, and last Expression of his dying Testimony, *The Testimonies of Martyrs are not our Rule.* 4. It, as some have remarked *, the dying Testimonies and last Speeches of any of these Sufferers, recorded in the *Cloud of Witnesses*, have been corrupted, and Additions made to them; then their Testimonies are of less Weight.

And considering what the Publisher of the *Cloud of Witnesses* says of Alterations made by him concerning Mr. *Wilson* Writer in *Lanark* his Testimony, and what Mr. *Wodrow* observes on this Publisher's Conduct relative to it, there wants not Ground to suspect he used more Freedom with those Testimonies, in making Alterations in them, than he ought. And, 5. Tho' I doubt not the Truth of these Testimonies, as to the Substance of them; yet unless I saw their Originals, or a Copy published by some other Hand, I could not lay great Stress upon them, in regard the Publisher had the Confidence to print and publish such a notorious Falshood as he doth, p. 358. when giving a Relation of the Persecution and Death of that worthy Gentleman, *Henry Hall* of *Haughhead*; where giving an Account of that Paper found on him when taken at or near *Queensferry*, commonly called *Queensferry-paper*, or Mr. *Gargill's Declaration*, or his *Covenant*, of which Paper probably that Publisher knowing some Things in it were condemned by Mr. *Shields* and others, he says, *I shall not pretend to justify every Expression in it*; And then affirms, "The Sufferers for the most Part did not adhere to it without the Limitation, *In so far as it was agreeable to the Word of God and our National Covenant.*" A gross Falshood, as is evident from the Testimonies of *David Hackson* of *Rathillet*, of *Archibald Alison*, *John Malcom*, Mr. *James Skeen*, *Isabel Alison*, *Marion Hervie*, *Laurence Hay*, *William Thomson*, *William Guthrie*, *Robert Carnock*, *Patrick Foreman*, *David Ferrie*, *James Stewart*, *Robert Gray*, *James Nisbet*, *James Lauson*, *Alexander Wood*, *James Graham* and *John Richmond*. Yea, I cannot see so much as one Person in all the *Cloud of Witnesses* that owned this *Queensferry-paper*, but they adhered to it without the least Restriction or Limitation; only *Isabel Alison* once, when asked if she would adhere to it, answered, she would as it was according to the Scriptures, and said she saw not wherein it did contradict them. Now, a Man whose Conscience allowed him to publish such a manifest Falshood, what

* *Wod. Hist.* p. 145, 183. Vol. 2d.

what might he not add to their Speeches to make them serve his Purpose? 6. If this has been the Fault of the Church of *Scotland* since the Revolution, that she hath not justified the Suffering of the Lord's Servants and People in the former persecuting Period, then she was equally guilty from 1638 to 1649: For I see no Act of Assembly in that Period justifying the Wrestlings of the Lord's Servants and People in the foregoing Times; in which, as says the Author of the *Preface* to the *Cloud of Witnesses*, "James VI. imprisoned some of the most zealous and faithful Ministers, calls them before his Council, indites them of Treason and Lese-Majesty, for their making Use of their Freedom Christ had given them; and after their declining his and his Council's usurp'd Authority in spiritual Matters, and for witnessing a good Confession for the Royal Dignity of their Master, banish them their native Country." 7. 'Tis false to say, "The Church of *Scotland*, from the Revolution to this Time, hath rather slighted, if not condemned, than justified these Sufferings and Wrestlings." For the first General Assembly after the Revolution, in their Causes for a national Fast, after speaking of the Anger of the Lord's dividing us, and being brought under the Feet of Strangers, says, "And many of our Brethren were killed, and others taken Captive and sold as Slaves." And, afterwards, speaking of the sinful Oaths which were the Occasion of much Suffering and Bloodshed, says, "And many were ruined and oppressed for not taking them." And downwards in that same Act, they instance the sad Persecutions that many had been rysted with for their Conscience towards God. Further, the Commission of Assembly 1713, in their *Seasonable Warning*, calls the Sufferings of the late Times, not only *Severities*, but also *unparalleled Cruelties*. This was surely a justifying of them in their Sufferings, and a condemning their Enemies; of whom they say, "They might reasonably conclude they wanted nothing but Power to renew, against the Ministers and Members of this Church, the foresaid *Severities* and *unparalleled Cruelties*." 8. As to the not approving and justifying of their Testimonies in every Particular, I own this; and surely it had been Weakness to have justified them all in general, for in some Things their Testimonies are directly opposite. As, tho' some of them testify against the King's Authority, yet others, as the Marquis of *Argyle*, and the Reverend Mr. *James Guthrie*, expressly own it. So, tho' some of them adhered to the

Sanguinair Declaration, yet others, as Mr. *John Dick*, condemned it. And, as some adhered to the *Hamilton Declaration*, so others, as Mr. *James Skeen*, disowned it, tho' they were one as to the Substance of their *Testimonies*, holding the *Testimony of Jesus*. And I doubt not now they are all perfectly of one Mind and Judgment in all Things, in that City where the Lord God and the Lamb are the Light of it; yet while here, from different Degrees of Light, they had very different Sentiments in some Things, and both were not to be justified in every Particular.

But as to the alledged Evidence of the Church of Scotland's "Unparalleled disregarding, if not condemning, the "Sufferings and Wrestlings of the Martyrs, viz. Mr. "Wodrow's printing a publick History representing such "Witnessings, Wrestlings and Testimony-bearers in a very "odious Way" *Answer*. 1. Whatever Expressions may be in Mr. *Wodrow's* History which may seem to reflect upon these Sufferers, they cannot be laid to the Charge of the Church of Scotland, in regard that History was never revised nor approved by any Deed of this Church. 2. In my Opinion, that faithful Servant of Christ the Reverend Mr. *Wodrow* (now I doubt not in Glory, resting from his Labours, his Works following him) deserves highly of all true Presbyterians in this Church for his *History*; and I cannot but think, according to his best Information, he acted a fair ingenuous Part in his Representation of Matters of Fact narrated by him, tho' he was not infallible more than other Historians. 3. The Conduct of some of our Separatists, the Followers (I suppose) of Mr. *M'Millan*, by their Misrepresentations of Mr. *Wodrow's* History, hath done no Service to Religion, while they pretend to so much Strictness and Tenderness, and yet have acted such a disingenuous Part in their Representations of his History relating to some of the Sufferers in the late Times: And, had not this *Essay* swelled beyond my first Intention, in an Appendix I designed a Vindication of that worthy Author (who was well known to be a Person of great Integrity, Tenderness and Piety) from the Aspersions which have been cast upon his History by Separatists, particularly by the Author of *Plain Reasons*, the Author of the *Preface* to Mr. *M'Ward's Earnest Contendings*, the Author of the *Preface* to Mr. *Rennick's Life*, and the Author of the *Postscript* to his *Testimony*; where, in transcribing Mr. *Wodrow's* Words, sometimes a Word is left out which is enough to vindicate him from their Aspersions, and at other Times a Word

is added here and there to render him odious, and there Commentaries are put upon his Words which they can never bear: And, instead of being in the least an Approver of the Treatment they met with, he says much in their Vindication; as particularly, Vol. 2. P. 180. where, speaking of those Sufferers, he says, "They were found guilty of "Treason; yet their Blood-shed will by After-generations "be reckoned innocent Blood, and the Courses taken with, "and Inhumanities exercised towards them, must certainly "be abominated by all Persons."

23d *Object*. Such as have separated from a corrupt Church are expressly forbidden to return unto it, *Jer. xv. 19.* where the Lord says to the Prophet, *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* *Answ. 1.* I grant, where Separation hath been made upon sufficient Grounds, People ought not to return to that Church remaining in her Corruptions for which they separated. *2.* The Thing wherein the Prophet was forbidden to return unto them was, their Defection and Backsliding against which he had faithfully testified; he was forbidden to comply with these: The Lord required Priests and People should guard against going on in such Courses, and that they should return from them, turning to the Prophet, so as to obey his Voice and write after his Copy; but not as if he or the People were to separate and erect another Church. But, *3.* Tho' at that Time Priests and People were most corrupt, while the Prophets prophesied falsely, and the Priests bare Rule by their Means, and the People loved to have it so, *Jer. v. 31.* and albeit their Iniquity was come to a prodigious Height, as *Jer. ix. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* which made him with his Head was Waters, and his Eyes a Fountain of Tears; yet there is not one Word in all the Scripture of his separating from that Church: The Prophet was not bidden separate, nor was he forbidden to preach unto that People; Instead of this, we find him in the Temple preaching to them, as in the 28th Chapter downward from the 5th Verse. Tho' he was not to return unto the Priests or People, so as to join with them in any sinful Course, or so as to speak smooth Things; yet he was still allowed to have Communion with them in their Sacrifices, solemn Feasts and all instituted Temple-worship: So much Calvin and Mr. Shields affirm *.

24th *Object*. If Division and Separation be such an Evil, why was not the Assembly 1733 and her Commission more tender and cautious than to cast out the *Four Brethren*, whom

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* On Church Comm. P. 48.

whom at that Time they ejected from the Communion of this Church, which hath occasioned so much Division and Separation? And why has not the Assembly rescinded their Sentence against them in a full and ample Manner, that so these Brethren might have a fair opened Door to come in again to the Church of *Scotland*, which might be a Mean of healing Breaches, and preventing further Separation in sundry honest People? For, till the Door be further opened, and the Grounds of their Secession removed, we see not how they can come in.

Now, for Answer to the first of these Questions, as I declared formerly, I'm sorry ever such a Sentence was pronounced, whereby those Brethren were cast out from Communion with this Church; But, albeir I cannot approve of the Sentence casting them out, yet I know not but there may be Truth in what that worthy Servant of Christ, the Reverend Mr. *David Walker*, wrote me from *Temple* on that Subject, *May 2d 1734*; in which Letter, after commending Messieurs *Erskine* and *Moncrieff* as being godly Men, and hoping the same of Messieurs *Wilson* and *Fisher* tho' not acquainted with them, and after condemning the Judicatories for casting them out, says, " But yet let me freely
 " tell you, that there is one Step in Mr. *Erskine's* Conduct
 " that I am not able to justify; it is, When the Synod of
 " *Perth* and *Stirling* resolved to give him a modest Rebuke,
 " he did not silently receive it. I should never have ad-
 " vised my worthy Brother Mr. *Erskine* to have made any
 " Confession of a Fault even in his Expressions, when his
 " Conscience justified him in the same; but I cannot think
 " that his Silence at the Time that either the Synod or
 " General Assembly rebuked him, when they resolved
 " thereby to finish the Process, would be construed an
 " Acknowledgment of a Fault: I am sure that the History
 " of our blessed Lord's Sufferings bears expressly, that,
 " when he was accused of many Things before *Pilate*, he
 " answered nothing; and when he was urged by the self-
 " condemned Heathen Judge, he still continued silent;
 " and I am perswaded that no good Christian can alledge,
 " that his Silence did import any Confession of a Fault,
 " yea, it was a fulfilling of the Scripture, *Isa. liii. 7*.

But then, for Answer to the other Question, Why hath not the Assembly rescinded the Sentences past against them in a full and ample Manner? For my Part, I heartily wish they had: And, being of Opinion the acceding of the Brethren to the Judicatories of this Church might be a
 Mean

Mean thro' the Lord's Blessing of healing Divisions, I shall consider this Objection at some more Length.

1st, It would be considered, the General Assembly 1734, May 14th, did impower the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, in which Synod those Brethren have their Residence, to take their Case as it then stood under Consideration, giving them " Full Power to proceed and do therein as they should find most justifiable and expedient for restoring Peace and preserving the Authority of this Church, and for promoting the Edification of the Members of the Body of Christ; particularly for uniting the said four Brethren to the Communion of this Church, and restoring them to their respective Ministerial Charges."

2^{dly}, The Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, being clothed with the Power and Authority of the General Assembly as to that Matter, upon the 2d of *July* 1734, did, " by vertue of the said delegate Power and Authority, and in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, with one Voice and Consent, take off the Sentences pronounced by the Commission of the General Assembly 1733 against the foresaid Four Brethren, Masters *Ebenezer Erskine*, *William Wilson*, *Alexander Moncrieff* and *James Fisher*, declaring the same of no Force or Effect; for the future unite and restore them to Ministerial Communion with this Church, to their several Charges, and to the Exercise of all Parts of the Ministerial Function therein, as fully and freely as there never had been Act, Sentence, Obstacle or Impediment whatsoever in the Way thereof in Time past; all which are hereby declared sopite and set aside for the future." And appointed the Names of the Four Brethren to be inrolled immediately in the Rolls of that Synod, appointing Intimation hereof should be made in the Pulpits of *Stirling*, *Perth*, *Abernethy* and *Kinclaven*; and recommended it to Ministers named by the Synod to acquaint these Brethren with what the Synod had done in this Affair. Now, this being done, many of their Welwishers and good Friends thought the Door was so opened, that these Reverend Brethren might have acceded to the Judicatories of this Church, from which they were cast out; and to me this was, if not a formal, yet a material Rescinding of the Sentences pronounced against them.

Whereas, in Vindication of their not acceding upon what was done by that Assembly and the foresaid Synod in 1734, 'tis complained *, " That Assembly did not themselves judge of

* *Reasons of not acced.* p. 23.

“ of the Legality of the Sentences pronounced against the
 “ Brethren as they ought, seeing the Synod could not do
 “ this.” ’Tis answered, As the Assembly did not see an
 absolute Necessity for this, so, considering what a strong
 Party there was to struggle against, it might have taken the
 whole Time of an Assembly, if not more, before that Af-
 fair had been brought to a Period: For ’tis not so easy to
 get this or the other Thing done in an Assembly, tho’ they
 should be far supernumerary for Votes; for were it but Six
 or Seven, as of *Independents* in the *Westminster* Assem-
 bly, they may keep up an Assembly in arguing for a long
 Time||. Some say, What hath the Assembly more to do but
 bring Affairs to a Vote? But this cannot easily be done,
 else Clamour is raised, that ’tis not a free Assembly; and no
 doubt the opposite Party ought to be fully heard. And
 the Party opposite to these *Brethren* had an Argument,
 which would not been so easy to answer, taken from an Act
 of Assembly made in these Times which are reckoned
 Times of Reformation, namely, the above-mentioned Act
 of Assembly 1648; by which it is appointed, That “if
 “ any suspended Minister, during his Suspension, either
 “ exercise any Part of the Ministerial Calling, or intro-
 “ mit with the Stipend, that he be deposed, and after
 “ Deposition, continuing in either of these Faults, that he
 “ be proceeded with Excommunication.”

2. Whereas, the Assembly having enjoined the Synod of
Perth and *Stirling* to do in the Case of the Four Brethren,
 as they should find most justifiable and expedient for pre-
 serving the Authority of this Church, &c. ’tis asserted, “ That
 “ no Respect is to be paid to Authority which is opposite
 “ the Word of God, as were the Decisions of Judicatories
 “ in 1733 with respect to these Brethren †.” But tho’ no
 such Respect is to be paid to the Decrees, Sentences or De-
 terminations of Church-judicatories; tho’ a *General* or an
OEcumenical Council, as to give the least active Obedience
 to any sinful Injunction: Albeit I suspend my Judgment
 in this Case; yet many of the Learned, Judicious and
 Godly have been of Opinion, the Sentences of Church-
 judicatories, or the Authority of the Church in such Sen-
 tences, is so far to be regarded that we are to submit, so as
 to abstain from acting in Opposition to them. Mr. *Mil-
 lan*, in a Paper given in to the Commission June 9th 1704,
 subscribed it with his Hand, That “ the Sentences of the
 Church-

|| *Diffusive from Error*, p. 91, 95. † *Reasons of not as-
 ced*, p. 24.

" Church-judicatories, tho' unjust, ought to be submitted unto." And Mr. *Webster*, in his Letter to him, affirms, *This hath always been the Sentiment of orthodox Divines.* And the learned Author or Authors of the *Apologetical Relation*, p. 307. says, " A Minister who is called of God must not lay aside his Office, or the Exercise of his Office and Power, upon every Man's Desire; but, if he be excommunicated at all, it must be by such as have lawful Authority for that Effect, unto whom he is bound in Conscience to subject himself: And so he shall have Peace, tho' the Sentence be passed *clauso errante* unjustly." And there he seems to vindicate such Protesters as did not submit to the Sentences against them; " Because, says he, they were passed by a controverted Assembly, and which they look'd upon as no lawful Assembly, being unlawfully constituted." And the Assembly 1638, by her Act, Sess. 24. and the Assembly 1648, by her Act, Sess. 30. seem to have been of this Mind. So *Durham on Scandal*, Part 4. Chap. xvii. And when Mr. *Rutherford* was suspended by the high Commission, tho' he declined the Court because it was unlawful in its Constitution; yet, when they pass a severe Censure, depriving him of his Ministry, and confining him to *Aberdeen*, he submitted to the Sentence, by leaving his Flock, and residing in the Place of his Confinement, where his silent Sabbaths, having no Opportunity to preach Christ, were a heavy Burden to him, tho' he had sweet Fellowship with the Lord his God at that Time.

Our Brethren condemn that Principle of the *Independents* which says, *Ecclesiastical Synods or Councils have only a consultative Power and Authority*; affirming, this has a *native Tendency to introduce Anarchy and Confusion into the House of God* †. But I humbly think, if no Regard is to be had to the Determination of a Judicatory unless it be right and just in our own Eyes, then it will not be easy to show what more Power is given to superior Judicatories by them, than is given by *Independents*, or Men of *Congregational Principles*; for they own Synods are necessary to the *Welbeing of Churches*, and that their Determinations, " so far as consonant to the Word of God, are to be received with Reverence and Submission, not only for their Agreement therewith (without which, say they, they bind not at all) but also for the Power whereby they are made, as
being

" being an Ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word †."

3. I find 'tis argued, in Vindication of their not acceding to the Judicatories of this Church, That the Act of Assembly 1733 against the Four Brethren not being rescinded, it may be pleaded and adduced in Time coming as a Precedent for prosecuting the Ministers of this Church before her Judicatories, if they shall use their Ministerial Freedom, as the Brethren did, in testifying against her Defections: For, say they ||, " While that Act stands unrepealed, or not annulled, it remains an Act and Rule of this Church still, so far as an Act in a particular Case is a Rule in a Way of Precedent in Cases of the like Nature." Now, as to the Brethren, I cannot see any Ground to say the Sentences anent them are not materially rescinded, seeing, as the Assembly 1733 and their Commission did cast them out from this Church, so the Assembly 1734 gave the Synod of *Perth* Power and full Authority to restore and unite them again to the Communion thereof, and to their Ministerial Charges, which accordingly was done by that Synod: And this, in my Opinion, was a material Condemning of the Sentences of the former Assembly and Commission that had been pronounced against them. But, (2.) Whereas 'tis said the Act of Assembly 1733 against them, while unrepealed, " It still remains an Act and Rule of this Church, so far as an Act in a particular Case is a Rule in a Way of Precedent in Cases of the like Nature;" and therefore they cannot accede to the Judicatories till that Act is rescinded, lest they homologate that sinful Deed or Sentence. Now, if this Argument prove any Thing, it proves too much; for it says we are never to join with a Church which hath made any unjust or sinful Act till repealed: And so the Brethren could never be justified for joining formerly with the Church of *Scotland*, when such unaccountable Acts as that of the Assembly 1638, Sess. 23, 24. was unrepealed; which discharges all Persons of whatever Quality, Ministers or others, to speak or write against that Assembly, or any Act of that Assembly, under Pain of the Censures of the Church: A very bad Precedent! And so the Assembly 1642, Sess. 7. enjoins, That every Presbytery proceed against Non-communicants, whether Papists or others, according to the Act of Parliament; which looks too like the *English* *Sacra-*

† *Mather's Hist. of New-Engl. Book 3. p. 37. || Reason of not acced. p. 25, 26.*

mental Test: And also the above-cited Act of Assembly 1648, anent deposing all suspended Ministers who do not submit to the Sentences of Church-judicatories, and so of other bad Acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1649 *inclusive*. And, if an Act in a particular Case is a Rule in a Way of Precedent in similar Cases, or Cases of the like Nature, then the Instance of overturning the Settlement made by the Commission at *Auchtermuchty*, and the repeated Instances of our late General Assemblies in allowing the People of *Stow*, *Troqueir*, *Dennie*, &c. the Privilege of Sealing Ordinances, are good Precedents to plead in like Cases where Ministers are intruded upon Christian Congregations.

4thly, They say *, " Seeing an Accession to a Church cannot be made but in the Situation in which that Church is when the Accession is made unto her; therefore any Accession to her in that Situation so far approves of her, as to submit it to her Authority what is to be counted Defections, and what not; and, if that Church maintain not that Testimony which they that accede to her maintain, then they fall from their Testimony." But, for my Part, I cannot see the Force of this Argument: And the Reverend Messieurs *Linning*, *Shields* and *Boyd*, at the Revolution were far from this Opinion, else they had not acceded to this Church at that Time; but they thought it enough to give in their Testimony at that Juncture against what they judged amiss in her, and so acceded without falling from their Testimony. But what may be said in Answer to the 28th Objection will be a further Answer to this; and I suppose, according to the above Principle, there is no Church of Christ upon Earth they can join with.

5thly, 'Tis said †, " The Assembly 1734 and Judicatories of this Church looked on these Brethren as Criminals, seeing that Assembly impowered the Synod of *Pertb* and *Stirling* to take the Case of the four Brethren under Consideration, only in case such Application should be made to them for that Effect as they should judge proper." But, for my Part, tho' I think they might have impowered them to do this whether any such Application should be made or not; yet their impowering them under that Condition would not prove they looked on them as Criminals, seeing they did not injoin them to ask, nor did ever that Synod ask, the least Acknowledgment from them as being in an Error, or in the least wrong: So their acceding to this

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* *Reasons of not acced.* P. 29. † *Ibid.* P. 30.

this Church could never be charged on them as a taking with any Guilt, Crime or Fault in the least.

6thly, 'Tis said in their Vindication ||, " The Synod of
 " *Perth* and *Stirling*, by their Act receiving the Brethren
 " into Communion with this Church, have laid these Bre-
 " thren under a greater Restraint than did the Assembly
 " 1734, seeing they recommended to them to carry to-
 " wards the Lord's Servants their Brethren, Ministers of
 " this Church, their respective Flocks and Charges, as Mi-
 " nisters of Christ and his Gospel ought to do in all Time
 " coming." Now, as we are still to take Things by the
 best Handle, and to put the best Construction upon our
 Neighbours Words and Actions they can bear; so to me
 this is a Commentary upon the Words of that Synod which
 needs not be put upon them, nor I'm apt to think was it
 ever intended: Here was only a simple Recommendation, to
 carry to the Lord's Servants and their Flocks as Ministers of
 Christ and his Gospel ought to do; at which I see not how
 any could take just Offence, especially seeing the Synod
 also recommends it to their Co-presbyters, " To behave
 " towards them as Ministers of Christ in this Church;"
 yea, and at the same Time, enjoined all the Presbyteries
 and Ministers in their Bounds, as well as the four Brethren,
 " To demean themselves toward each other, as may answer
 " the Obligations they came under by their Ordination-
 " vows in the Lord." And whereas it is affirmed ‡,
 " The Synod's Meaning may be gathered from the solemn
 " Warning they give to all the People in that Province,
 " even to the People of *Muckhart*, &c. To beware of every
 " Thing that may encourage Division from, or weaken the
 " Hands of the Lord's Servants set over them; that is, say
 " they, that they submit to the Ministry even of such In-
 " truders, and take sealing Ordinances from their Hands."
 But surely this is a Stretch, or an unjust Commentary upon
 the Words of that Synod, seeing, 'tis well known, at that
 Time neither Presbytery nor Synod had received that Per-
 son so much as to enrol him, who was intruded by the Com-
 mission upon that Parish of *Muckhart*.

7thly, Whereas the Act of Assembly, May 14th 1734,
 ancient *Ministerial Freedom*, declares, " For the Satisfaction
 " of all, that due and regular *Ministerial Freedom* is still
 " entire to all Ministers; and that the same was not, nor
 " shall be held or understood to be anywise impaired or
 " restrained by the late Assembly's Decision in the Process
 of

" of Mr. *Erskine*, &c." Here 'tis complained of that Act, as if it justified the Act of Assembly 1733 against the four Brethren; for, according to them *, that Act says, " That due and regular Ministerial Freedom was not anywise impaired or restrained by the Decision of the General Assembly 1733 in this particular Process," viz. the Process of Mr. *Erskine*, &c. Now, this is not Matter of Fact; for 'tis a plain Misrepresentation of the Words of the General Assembly 1734 upon this Head: For that Assembly never says *Ministerial Freedom was not anywise impaired by that Act 1733*; for that Act of Assembly declares, for the Satisfaction of all, " That due and regular Ministerial Freedom is still left entire to all Ministers, and that the same was not, nor shall be held or understood to be anywise impaired or restrained by the late Assembly's Decision in that particular Process," viz. of Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine's*. And, as that Assembly 1734 declares for Ministerial Freedom in the plainest Terms; so, when they say, *Due and regular Ministerial Freedom was not held or understood to be impaired by that Decision*, that Assembly might mean no more, but only that they judged the Assembly 1733 did not design to restrain due and regular Ministerial Freedom by that Act; and so much the principal Men concerned in framing thereof did declare.

And such as were opposite to Mr. *Erskine* in that Assembly, and they who approve of their Conduct in that Affair, have always declared they did not condemn him for giving his Testimony against the Act of Assembly 1732, but for the Way and Manner of doing it, they having thought his Expressions upon that Head to be indecent and offensive: And the Reverend Mr. *Alexander Moncrieff*, in his *Reasons and Protestation* against the Sentence of the Synod of *Perth and Stirling* for finding Mr. *Erskine* censurable, to which Mr. *William Wilson* and others adhered, says, " We will not pretend to justify every Mode of Expression used by Mr. *Erskine* on this Head," viz. in speaking against the Act of Assembly 1732. The Author or Authors of the *Trial of the Testimony*, P. 99, 100. in Answer to Mr. *Erskine's Letter* to the Presbytery of *Stirling*, in which he asserts, the Brethren were cast out of the established Church for no other Reason, but because they could not find Freedom in their Conscience to retract the Testimony they had been helped to emit against some prevailing Defections; " That Author says, " Whereas, when the

“ Matter is searched to the Bottom, it will be found that it
 “ was not at all (let be only) for emitting your Testimony
 “ against these alledged Defections in that Sermon by you
 “ preached before the Synod *October* 1732,——but it
 “ was for several offensive Expressions uttered by you in
 “ that Sermon, as appears from the Assembly's *Act* there-
 “ anent.” And there he positively asserts, “ Mr. *Erskine*
 “ was never required to retract his Testimony emitted in his
 “ Synodical Sermon against Defections, nor required to re-
 “ tract his Judgment of the *Act* of Assembly 1732, nor
 “ the Matter of any Testimony given by him.” And the
 Authors of the *Narrative and State of the Proceedings of the*
Judicatories, &c. affirm the same.

And the four Brethren cannot but be convinced, whatever
 might be intended by the Assembly 1733, yet the General
 Assembly 1734 (being, as themselves acknowledge, “ com-
 “ posed of Reverend and Honourable Members, many of
 “ them of considerable Standing in the Ministry, whom
 “ they regard as faithful Labourers in the Lord's Vine-
 “ yard,”) never designed to justify the Sentence against
 the Brethren: Far from it; for 'tis well known the major
 Part of that Assembly were opposite to and did condemn
 that Decision. And the Sentence of the Commission in
 1733, against these Reverend Brethren, was in 1734 ex-
 pressly excepted from being approven, in approving of the
 Commission-book; nor hath it ever yet been approven by
 the Assembly. And they are most injurious to the Assembly
 1734, to the Synod of *Perth* and *Stirling*, and to the As-
 sembly which approved of what that Synod did, who say,
 These Assemblies and that Synod, by their Acts restoring
 the Brethren to Communion with this Church, “ have all
 “ declared against Ministerial Freedom in testifying against
 “ iniquous Acts or Decisions of General Assemblies, or o-
 “ ther Church-judicatories*.” For there is nothing in any
 of their Acts or Decisions from which any such harsh Con-
 clusion can justly be inferred; instead of that, they declare
 in the plainest Terms, that due and regular Ministerial
 Freedom is still left intire to all Ministers.

But then, as to the Removal of the *Grounds* of their
Secession, in my Opinion these *Grounds* were not sufficient
 to found a *Separation* or a *Secession* from a Church, tho'
 they were just Ground of Complaint and Lamentation;
 and the Brethren formerly never thought them such. And
 if I be not far mistaken, had they not been ejected or cast
 out

out from Communion with this Church, they had not separated nor made a Secession upon such Grounds. And I hope they will think it is of Weight what the judicious *Durham* says, when laying down Rules anent Union, where he expresseth himself thus *; "What cannot warrant a Breach where there is Union, that cannot warrantably be the Ground to keep up a Division. Now, there are many Miscarriages or Defects which are really gross, and yet will not warrant a Schism; as all that write thereon do clear, and is obvious to all. The Reason of the Consequence is, because making up a Breach is no less a Duty than preventing thereof. And further, if it began upon such a Ground, then the continuing thereof upon the same Ground, is but the continuing in the same Sin; and it cannot be thought that any Party, by dividing upon an unjust Ground, can afterward be justified upon the same Ground. It remains therefore, that if the Ground was not sufficient at first to warrant a Separation or Division, it cannot be sufficient afterward to continue the same."

But, whereas 'tis said, The Grounds of their Secession are not yet removed; and, in a Consistency with their Testimony, they cannot come in to the Communion of this Church till those Obstacles be taken out of the Way. Our Brethrens principal Grounds, summed up in the 40th Page of their *Reasons of not acceding*, being four, I shall speak a few Words to each of them.

And, 1st, Whereas there 'tis affirmed, "Many of the Lord's People, who cannot submit to the Ministry of Intruders, are virtually excommunicated, and Ministers who shall adventure to administrate sealing Ordinances to them, are obnoxious to the highest Censures of the Church, according to the Act of Assembly 1733 concerning some Ministers in the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*; which Act, say they, stands yet unrepealed." Now, for Answer, 1. As to the Act of Assembly 1733, anent some Brethren in the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, that Act is materially rescinded; in regard the Assembly having left it to the Synod of *Fife* to do in the Affair of *Kinross* (anent which that Act was made) as to the admitting of that People to partake of Church-privileges as they should think fit, the Synod of *Fife* did upon this allow that People to have the Benefit of Church-privileges wherever they should think meet to ask them. 2. As to the Danger of Church-censure for

* On *Scand.* Part 4. Chap. 7.

for administering Church-privileges to any that have not Freedom to receive them from such as have been thrust in upon them. Here, if I mistake not, there is no great Ground to fear; especially considering those whom they suspect most, seem to be easy upon this Head, and seem clear for allowing the Privilege of sealing Ordinances to all who scruple to receive them from their own Parish-ministers. And, 3. Tho' they should suffer upon this Head in that Case, I think their Sufferings would be upon clearer Grounds, notwithstanding of the Act anent some Brethren in *Durfermline*-presbytery, or yet the Act of Assembly 1647, which requires every Member in every Parish to keep their own Kirk, and partake of Word and Sacraments there.

As to their 2d principal Ground, viz. "That the Acceptance of Presentations is not declared to be contrary to the Principles of this Church; nor is there an effectual Stop put to the Intrusion of any into the Office of the Ministry contrary to the Will of the Congregation to which they are appointed." *Answer.* As to the Acceptance of Presentations, I'm sure the Church of Scotland at this Day hath declared against them as much, yea more, as did the Assemblies from 1638 to 1649. And had any of our late Assemblies done as much as did the Assembly 1638, it had been the justest Ground of Complaint; for that Assembly allowed not barely to accept of, but to seek Presentations, if the Presbytery were advised with, and their Advice had to seek them. And so did the Assembly 1642, by their Act anent Lists to Patrons. And tho' I cannot but condemn their Conduct, yet, in that so-much magnified Period, the seeking of Presentations was so little thought of by Ministers, that Presbytery-records, particularly the Presbytery of *Kirkaldy*, October 1st 1640, expressly bears their advising one Mr. Robert Bruce to seek a Presentation from the Earl of *Rothes* to the Parish of *Balingrie*.

And as to the putting a Bar to violent Intrusions, the General Assembly 1736 having revived that old Act which declares against settling any Church-officers contrary to the Will of the Congregation, it may be hoped such Settlements will be guarded against in Time coming.

As to the 3d principal Ground, namely, *That no Warning hath been emitted against the Errors and blasphemous Heresies vented among us.* As for my Part, I should be glad to see such a Warning emitted by the General Assembly: But the Neglect of this is only an Omission, and will not be
recko-

reckoned a just Ground of Separation, more than it was for any to separate from the Church of *Corinth*, *Pergamos* and *Thyatira*, because they did not emit such Warnings when Errors had crept in among them. And further, the General Assembly, by her *Act anent the Method of Preaching*, has given such a Warning, at least to all Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel.

As to their 4th principal Ground, namely, *That the Act restraining Ministerial Freedom hath not been repealed*. As it is denied that ever any such *Act* was made, so I have said enough to that already; and therefore shall not further insist upon it. Only I think there is as much, and far more Ground for repealing the *Act* of Assembly 1638, which discharges all to speak a Word against that Assembly, or any *Act* thereof, as being a bad Precedent, as to speak against and cry out for the repealing of this *Act* upon any such account.

But to conclude this Point, tho' none of these Grounds were in the least removed, yet 'tis my Opinion those Reverend Brethren should come in and testify in a Way of Church-communion against what they see amiss in their Mother-church. Perhaps it will be objected, The Brethren were willing to stay in the Church of *Scotland*, testifying in a Way of Church-communion, till she cast them out for testifying against what was wrong in her Conduct; and so the Blame of the Rent, Schism, Separation or Secession, is to be laid at their Door who ejected them. I answer to this briefly, That the *Acts* ejecting the four Brethren being materially rescinded, as was said above, and the Assembly 1734 having also by an express *Act* declared, "Due and regular Ministerial Freedom is still left entire, and that the same was not, nor shall be held or understood to be anywise impaired or restrained by the late Assembly's Decision in that particular Process;" Therefore I humbly think the Door is open for their coming in and testifying in a Way of Church-communion against what they judge amiss in the Church of *Scotland* at this Day. And seeing they are invited to return, if they still refuse to come in, some will think they are as much to be blamed as such Children who being put to the Door by their Mother in a Fit of Passion for doing their Father's Will, in seeking to have the House cleansed (tho' he keeps House with her, and hath not as yet given her a Divorce) declare they will never own their Mother more, nor have Dealing with her, tho' she hath sent an Invitation desiring them

them to come in again, till her Fault be amended, and the House be so and so as they would have it: But we yet hope better Things of our dear Brethren. And what the judicious *Durham* said in his *Dying Testament to the Church of Scotland*, or *Treatise on Scandal* *, is of Weight, where he says, " Union may also be consistent with many particular Failings and Defects in the Exercise of Government; as possibly the sparing of some corrupt Officers and Members, yea, the censuring of some unjustly, or the Admission of some that are unfit for the Ministry, and such like: These indeed are Faults, but they are not such as make a Church to be no Church. And tho' these have sometimes been pretended to be the Causes of Schisms and Divisions in the Church in Practice, yet were they never defended to be just Grounds of Schisms and Divisions, but were ever condemned by all Councils and Fathers, and cannot be in Reason sustained.——Sure there were such corrupt Acts of all Kinds among the Jews Church-officers: Yet is it clear that *Nicodemus* and *Joseph of Arimathea* did continue to govern jointly notwithstanding thereof, who yet cannot be counted accessory to any of their Deeds, because (which is a third Reason) Men in such Cases have Access, even when they are present, to discountenance such corrupt Acts by not consenting thereto, and testifying against the same; yea, they may by so doing stand in the Way of many wicked Acts, which by dividing they cannot do, which is sufficient for their Exoneration both before God and Men: As we may see in the Instances of *Joseph* and *Nicodemus* mentioned, who continued united in the Government, kept the Meetings even when Sentences pass against those who will acknowledge Christ, and Orders for persecuting him and them. And yet they are declared free, because they dissented from, and testified against the same: Yea, their Freedom and Exoneration, by vertue of their Dissent, being present, is more solemnly recorded to their Honour in the Gospel, than if they had divided." And to suspend Church-communion till all Grievances be removed, as Mr. *Hog* says †, is destitute of Scripture-warrant. And by sundry Arguments he shows the Unreasonableness of this, as doth *Durham* also on *Scandal*, Part 4. Chapter 7. where he cites *Augustine* with Approbation, commending the Practice of *Pretextatus* and *Felicianus*, " who being condemned (and 'tis like unjustly) says he, by

" Three

* Part. 4. Chap. 7. † Letters, p. 20.

“ Three hundred and eighteen Bishops; yet did, for Con-
 “ cord’s Sake, return and join with these who did condemn
 “ them, and by them were, without all Loss or Diminution
 “ of their Honour, received into Fellowship.”

And, ’tis well known, the four *Brethren* had not a
 Thought of going out from the Church of *Scotland* if they
 had not been cast out: For then they professed that a *Re-
 gard*, a great *Regard*, yea, a very great *Regard*, was due
 to the Judicatories of this Church; as in Mr. *Erskine’s Pro-
 testation* given in to the Assembly *May 14th 1733*. And
 so much the Reverend Mr. *Fisher* also hints in his *Ad-
 ditional Reasons* given in to the General Assembly that Year,
 when he says, “ This Sentence of the Synod, finding Mr.
Erskine censurable, has an evident Tendency to throw him
 “ and many others out of the Communion of this Church,
 “ who, in the Judgment of Charity, I am bound to believe
 “ would seal their Adherence to the valuable Privileges
 “ with which the King of Zion hath vested her, with the
 “ last Drop of their Blood.” And, before their Ejection,
 they looked upon it as a great Injury and Prejudice done
 them, to be cast out from the Communion of this Church.
 Hence in their *Representations* to the *Commission*, p. 42, 43.
 they say, “ We are not conscious to ourselves of any Thing
 “ done against our Brethren that deserves such a severe
 “ Censure from them; What Trespas have we committed
 “ against any Article of our *Confession of Faith*? or where-
 “ in have we transgressed against any of the received Prin-
 “ ciples or the approved Rules of this Church, that our
 “ Mother’s Sons are so very angry with us as to threaten to
 “ cast us out of the Lord’s Vineyard?” And if in 1733
 she was a true Church of Christ, having valuable Privi-
 leges with which the King of Zion had vested her, which
 they were ready to seal with the last Drop of their Blood,
 I hope she is not so far degenerate since that Time, but
 with a good and safe Conscience she may be joined with in
 her Judicatories and all Ordinances.

I know ’tis said the Brethren could do little Good tho’
 come in again, considering what a Number there is in Ju-
 dicatories to oppose every Thing that looks like Reforma-
 tion. But I am sure they may keep their own Conscience
 free, by retaining their Judgment till what may be recko-
 ned better Times: And they may do as much Good in Ju-
 dicatories as *Nicodemus* and *Joseph of Arimathea* could do, in
 the *Jewish Sanhedrim* in their Day; as much as our worthy
 Ancestors from 1610 to 1637 could do, at which Time

Messieurs Robert Bruce, Andrew and James Melvills, David Calderwood, Samuel Rutherford, Alexander Henderson, David Dickson, and others, remained in the Church; at which Time Rutherford complains *he was most unkindly handled by his Presbytery*, Letter 6th, Part 3d, Date June 2d 1631. And in his 8th Letter, March 9th 1632, he says, *Two or Three must fight against a Presbytery*; and his Presbytery consisted of sixteen Ministers. And, in his 35th Letter, he says, "I do every Day see the Face of my Brethren smiling upon me, but their Tongues carry Reproaches and Lies of me a hundred Miles off; they have made me odious to the Bishop of St. Andrews." Had Rutherford been of some Peoples Mind, he, with those Two or Three, should have constituted a Presbytery.

Was it but one Vote, it may do much at a Time; as, when the Brethren were ejected, one Vote would have prevented it: And when Members were electing to the Assembly 1734, in the Presbytery where Mr. Fisher hath his Residence, if his Vote had been there, it had sent six Commissioners to that Assembly upon what he would have reckoned the right Side of the Question.

Durham*, when speaking of *occasional Means* which may have Influence upon Division, and shewing wherein the Strength of the Temptation to keep up Division doth ly, and what may have Influence, especially upon Churchmen, he instances sundry Things, as *personal Credit*, and *irritating of their Followers*: But I hope those Reverend Brethren are Men of more Self-denial and Religion, than that any such Things should have Weight with them. And, for my Part, as I humbly think they should and might come in with a safe Conscience, that so Division, which Durham calls the *greatest Plague of the Church*, might be prevented and removed; so I heartily wish our Assembly had given them a new formal Invitation to come in: For, as Durham says, "Even that Party which seems to be rightest in the Matter, and to have Authority on its Side, or to have Countenance from others, ought yet to condescend, yea, in some Things to be most condescending; because such are in some sort Parents and strong, they ought therefore the more tenderly to bear and cover the Infirmities of the Weak; and, because they are more sober and at themselves, they therefore ought to carry the more seriously towards others whom they suppose to be in a Distemper, and not to be equally gross in handling the tender

* On Scand. Part 4. Chap. 5.

" tender Things of the Church, whereof Union is a main
 " one : And, considering that Authority is given for Edi-
 " fication, it is not unsuitable for it to condescend for at-
 " taining its End ||." And I wish both the Brethren and
 the Church of *Scotland* would consider what he says in the
 17th Chapter of that excellent Treatise, when speaking of
 the Remedies of Divisions arising from the Misapplication
 of Power in censuring or sparing Ministers, real or suppo-
 sed, in which there are sundry Things very suitable to
 our Case at this Day.

If any incline to see more upon the Subject of Separatists
 not acceding to the Judicatories of a Church, or not join-
 ing in Communion with her till Grievances be redressed,
 they may read what Mr. *Hog* says in his Letters, p. 19, 20,
 21. where, upon this Subject of Separatists not joining with
 the Church of *Scotland* till Grievances be redressed, he says,
 " To treat with us upon that Posture, or upon such Terms,
 " is a Treatment neither scriptural, reasonable, just nor
 " fair; nor is it the habile Way to get Grievances redres-
 " sed.—— If this be the Condition of Union, it can
 " never take Place in our Day, nor in any other Period
 " for what I know; at this Rate ye proclaim a perpetual
 " War: Nor is there any Condescension here; for we
 " might return to the Church of *Rome*, would they redress
 " just Grievances, and return to their happy State wherein
 " they were when the Apostle *Paul* wrote his Epistle to the
 " *Romans*.—— But, to make Church-communion necessa-
 " rily to depend on such a Redress in every Part, is both
 " destitute of a necessary Warrant from the Word, and
 " requires a Standing-out until the Churches of Christ be
 " brought to such a State as we are never like to see, nor
 " for what I know is contained within the Verge of the
 " Lord's gracious Promises unto his Church." And there
 he says, for the redressing of Grievances complained of at
 this Day, "'Tis necessary both Church and State be cast
 " into the same Mould in which they were between 1638
 " and 1649, &c."

But, to conclude this Objection, As in the Entry upon
 it I said I could not justify the *Brethrens* Secession upon
 Presbyterian Principles; so their Practice in receiving so
 easily such as profess to be discontented with their own Mi-
 nisters, however faithful they be if opposite to their Mea-
 sures, looks very like what hath been reckoned the *Inde-
 pendent* Scheme, which they profess to oppose. And hence

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the

the London Ministers, in Preface to their *7th Div. Reg. Eccl.* when showing the Difference between *Independents* and *Presbyterians*, they place this as one, That *Independents* " their Churches are gathered out of other true visible " Churches, without any Leave or Consent of Pastor and " Flock, yea, against their Wills, receiving such as tender " themselves, yea, too often by themselves or others, di- " rectly or indirectly, seducing Disciples after them." Whereas, according to Presbyterian Government or Principles, they say, " The gathering of Churches out of " Churches hath no Footsteps in Scripture, is contrary to " Apostolical Practice, is the Scattering of Churches, the " Daughter of Schism, the Mother of Confusion, but the " Step-mother of Edification."

And *Rutherford* speaks to the same Purpose in his Treatise upon *Conscience*, p. 99. where he says,—" *Paul* " could not endure the Divisions of one and the same " Church of *Corinth*, tho' they pretended not to be diffe- " rent Churches; for those that said they were of *Paul*, " professed they could not be Disciples of *Peter*: But he " sharply rebuked them as carnal Men, and such as divi- " ded Christ, and by consequence must say, *Paul was cru-* " *cified for them, and was their Redeemer*: And so, if ob- " stinately they had proceeded in that Separation, *Paul* " would have gone on to higher Censures of the Church. " Far more could he not endure gathering of true Church- " es out of true Churches, which is the professed Practice " of *Independents*." Yea, our Brethren, in their Practice, seem contrary both to the Presbyterians and Independents in *England*, in the *Articles* of their Agreement entred into a little after the *Revolution*, where, in the Article of the *Communion of Churches*, 'tis said, " We ought not to admit " any one to be a Member of our respective Congregati- " ons that hath joined himself to another, without Endea- " vours of mutual Satisfaction of the *Congregations concer-* " *ned*."

25th *Object*. Such Terms of Communion are required of Ministers and People in the Church of *Scotland* at this Day, as cannot be complied with without Sin; and therefore Separation from her is surely Duty. And here sundry such Terms are instanced, as in the *Brethren's 1st Test.* p. 81. 2d *Test.* p. 109. 'tis said, The Judicatories of this Church, by censuring Mr. *Erskine*, and such as joined with him in the *Protestation* against the Assembly 1733, " because they " had not Freedom to retract their *Protestation*, and pro- " fess

" fells their Sorrow for it, two sinful Terms of Ministerial
 " Communion have been imposed. 1. That no Minister
 " of this Church should testify from the Pulpit against
 " Acts of Assembly, and Proceedings of Church-Judica-
 " tories, even tho' they were such as had a direct Ten-
 " dency to undermine our Constitution. 2. That no Mi-
 " nister or Member of this Church should *protest*, for their
 " own Exoneration, against Acts, Sentences, or Decisions
 " of the supreme Judicatory, even tho' they should nearly
 " affect the publick Cause of God, and restrain Ministe-
 " rial Freedom and Faithfulness in testifying against the
 " Sins and Defections of a backsliding Church." Answer,
 Was it so, that the Church of *Scotland* requires any sinful
 Terms of Communion of her Ministers and other Mem-
 bers, Separatists would have much, yea enough to say for
 themselves; for we are to separate from all the Churches
 in the World, rather than be guilty of the least Sin. Yet
 these Sentences were not sinful Terms of Communion to
 all the Ministers of this Church; for they respected the
four Brethren allenarly. Had they been in such general
 Terms as is the Act of Assembly 1638, which hath never
 been complained of, testified against, nor sought to be re-
 scinded by the *Brethren*, nor by any else to this Day; then
 perhaps it might been thought that Act respected other
 Ministers and People, as a Term of Communion, as well as
 them: For that Act, as was said above, did constitute and
 ordain, " That from henceforth (which might be from
 " that Moment for ever) no sort of Person, of whatsoe-
 " ver Quality and Degree, be permitted to speak or write
 " against the said Confession, this Assembly, or any Act of
 " this Assembly, and that under the Pain of incurring the
 " Censures of this Kirk." And, according to the *Bre-*
thren's arguing here, it was a Sin for any to join in Com-
 munion with the Church of *Scotland*, from *December* 18,
 1638, to this Moment; for, according to them, that As-
 sembly, by their forementioned Act, made it a Term of
Ministerial Communion, " That no Minister shall, upon any
 " Occasion, testify from the Pulpit against any Act of
 " Assembly, be it never so sinful; or against any of the
 " Proceedings of the Judicatories, be they never so un-
 " warrantable." See 1st *Test.* p. 82. For there was far
 more Ground to make their Inference from the Act of
 Assembly 1638, than from the Act of Assembly 1733;
 and so all our worthy Ancestors from that Day, and the
Brethren themselves, according to their Argument, have
 been

been living in a Church in which there was a very sinful Term of Communion required of them; and yet they never complained of it, nor have they given the least Testimony against it. But further, the above Act 1733, relating to these Brethren, being materially rescinded, as was shown above, this Objection, even as to them, falls to the Ground. But then, as to the second alledged sinful Term of Communion, viz. "That no Minister, or Member of this Church, shall protest against Acts, Sentences, or Decisions of the supreme Judicatory, &c." Answer, As the Act respected only the four Brethren; so that being rescinded materially as to them, the Objection is not of Force, nor made a Term of Ministerial or Christian Communion to any Person in this Church. The General Assembly 1638, in their Sentence of Deposition against Archbishop *Spotiswood* and others, declares, "That to decline and protest against a General Assembly, is, by the Acts of Assembly, censurable with no less Censure than *summar Excommunication*." And, some say, to have no Regard unto the Decision of a General Assembly, is a material declining the Authority thereof; and seems to be as much as to say, No Regard is to be had to her Decisions, unless we judge them right; Which is no more but what all *Independents* will own. A 3d alledged sinful Term of Communion imposed upon the Ministers and Members of this Church, is, "That the Assembly 1733 discharged the Presbytery of *Dunfermline* to admit any of the Parish of *Kinross* to sealing Ordinances, without Allowance from him who was thrust in upon them." Answer, That was an Act I never justified; but as it was only an Act in a particular Case, and an Act which only concerned the Presbytery of *Dunfermline* and Parish of *Kinross*, so it was no Term of Communion to other Ministers and Parishes. And further, as already hinted, that Act was materially rescinded by the Assembly 1735, when, as was told formerly, they allowed the Synod of *Fife* to do in that Affair as they saw meet, or should find most for Edification; who, being clothed with Power from the Assembly in that Matter, allowed that People to ask, and Ministers to admit them to Church-privileges where they pleased: And there was nothing in that Act which looked so like a sinful Term of Communion to the Ministers and Members of this Church, as was the Act of Assembly 1647, which obliged every Member in every Congregation to hear and partake of sealing Ordinances in their own Parish, however naughty

the Minister might be; for no Parish was excepted: And tho' at that Time it was the Principle of the Church of Scotland, that the People have Right to chuse their Pastors; yet Patronages were then in Force, whereby the Liberty of Election was much hindered, as Mr. *Henderson* says in his above-cited *Treatise*.

Indeed, if such or such had Acts shall require my Approbation of them, that would be a sinful Term of Communion; but the bare making of such an Act will not prove it to be a Term of Communion: The Act of Assembly 1642, whereby Presbyteries were obliged to give a List of Six to every Patron, was not a Term of Communion to every Minister; nor the Act 1647, whereby all were obliged to partake of the Seals of the Covenant in their own Parish, which might be more unjust in respect of some Ministers in Scotland than the Act of Assembly respecting the Parish of *Kinross*; yet, I suppose, none of these, nor such like were ever reckoned sinful Terms of Christian Communion in these Times.

The Brethren, P. 57. of their first *Testimony*, speaking of that Act 1647, say, "This Act was made with reference to those who were regularly called to the holy Ministry by the Judgment of the Presbytery and Consent of the Congregation, and who beside had the Qualifications mentioned in the same Act." But in those Lines our Brethren have asserted two Things which, in my humble Opinion, are not Matter of Fact: For, 1. In these Times the Call of Pastors was not *regular*, tho' with the Judgment of the Presbytery and Consent of the Congregation; for then the Patron was to have his Choice of Six, and the Presbytery and People behoved to be content with any of them he was pleased to pitch upon, tho' he should be the Man of all the Six they least desired. And (besides what Mr. *Henderson* says in his above-cited *Treatise*) in the History of those Times many Instances are found, which evidence that the People had not always their free Choice. And, 2. 'Tis not Fact, that at this Time all the Ministers of the Church of Scotland had the Qualifications mentioned in that Act, viz. "Being diligent in fulfilling their Ministry, holy and grave in their Conversation, faithful in Preaching, declaring the whole Counsel of God, &c." and our Brethren never offer the least Proof for this: The Assembly's bare Charge unto Ministers to be such, was not a sufficient Evidence hereof; or else it would follow, the Ministers of the Church of Scotland have always had such desirable

firable Qualifications since she emitted her *Seasonable Ad-*
monition in 1698; for in it she seriously beseeches all Mi-
 nisters, to approve themselves as the Ministers of God, &c.
 enlarging in pressing their Duties upon them. But surely
 there were many naughty Men among the Ministers in that
 Period, if we consider what the Assembly 1645 declare in
 their *Solemn and Seasonable Warning*, where they own at
 that Time there were divers in the Ministry who were
Time-servers, and Ministers who strengthened the Hearts and
Hands of the Profane more than of the Godly, Ministers that
 had not taken heed to the Ministry which they had received of
 the Lord, to fulfil it. And this appears further, if we con-
 sider the Faults of Ministers instanced by the Assembly
 1646, where the *slighting of God's Worship in their Families*,
corrupt Entry to the Ministry as to a Way of living in the
World, their helping in and holding in of insufficient Men,
Partiality in favouring and speaking for the Scandalous both
Ministers and others, Idleness, seldom preaching, as once on
the Lord's Day, and the like. And, even when 1649 was
 come, there were many in the Church of Scotland who were
 unworthy the Name of *Gospel-Ministers*, as is evident from
 the *Causes of Fasting*, which were drawn up by the Com-
 mission of that Assembly, and reprinted by the Synod of Lo-
 thian 1654, and again in 1732 by the Reverend Mr. Boston,
 in which that Commission laments over "the great Partia-
 lity which was in Judicatories, by censuring Persons of
 meaner Rank, while the like Zeal was not shown against
 the Sins of such as were more eminent for Wealth, Place
 or Dignity in the World;" where also they lament,
 that then not a few, but many of the Ministers in the
 Church, "they laboured not to set forth the Excellency of
 Christ in his Person, Offices and the unsearchable Riches
 of his Grace, the New Covenant, and the Way of living
 by Faith in him; nor making this the main and chief
 Theme and Matter of their Preaching, as did the A-
 postle, 1 Cor. iii. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 5. Col. i. 28. nor preaching
 other Things with relation to Christ:" And there they
 charge many of them with pressing Duties in a mere legal
 Way, without pointing their Hearers to their Furniture for
 Duty; and much more have they to that Purpose, lamenting
 also, that, when they preached Christ, it was not in a Gospel-
 way. And further, what I lately saw in a Letter from that
 worthy Servant of Christ, the Reverend Mr. David Walker
 late Minister of the Gospel at Temple, seems to confirm it,
 that in this so much extolled Period there were many naughty
 Men

Men for speaking of the Assemblies from 1638 to 1649; he says, " It is most true, that the former Assemblies had " in them a good Number of Ministers who were eminent " for Learning, Piety and Zeal; but, as far as I can under- " stand, the Plurality was both weak and worthless." And there, I think, he intimates he had this from the Reverend Mr. *James Kirkton*, who says he *had seen sundry of those Assemblies.*

The Brethren thought it Duty to testify against these above-mentioned Acts of Assembly 1733, as containing sinful Terms of Communion; but 'tis thought there was far clearer Ground to testify against the Act of Assembly 1648, by which the taking of the Covenant was made a Term of Christian Communion; so that from that Time all Persons whatsoever were to take it at their first receiving the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, and not so much as a Servant Lad or Lass was to be excused. Now, if that be meant of the *National Covenant*, might not some serious Souls, having the Truth of Grace, but wanting sensible reflex Assurance, had a Scruple to swear they had *the Knowledge and Love of God's true Religion imprinted on their Hearts by the Holy Spirit?* Or might not some serious Souls, having a full sensible Assurance, being perswaded the Believer is beyond all Danger of Hell, had a Scruple to swear to do so and so, *under the Danger of both Body and Soul in the Day of God's fearful Judgment?* which are the Words of that Covenant; And, if I mistake not, most Part of the seven Brethren sometime since 1722 would had a Scruple to swear in the above Terms. And if the Covenant there mentioned is the *Solemn League*, might not some Persons of weaker Capacity, having the Truth of Grace, scrupled to swear, that *with their Estates and Lives they should defend the Rights and Privileges of Parliaments*, because they did not understand them? And indeed, as the learned zealous Author of the *Apologetical Relation*, P. 126, 127. when vindicating those that had not taken that Oath, which was called the *Oath of Allegiance* in King *Charles II's* Time, says, " These Questions concerning the Power of Princes " and Parliaments are dark and ticklish; and Ministers, " not being Lawiers by Profession, cannot be supposed to " be well acquainted with the Laws and Constitutions of " the Realms, or with the Nature and Extent of the same " in all Points; yet it concerns them to see to this, that " they run not themselves upon the Rock of contradictory " Oaths: And having sworn to endeavour in their Places " and

“ and Callings the Preservation of the Rights and Privileges of Parliament, it concerns them and all not a little, to search so far into the Rights and Privileges of Parliament, as that they may know when an Oath is tendered unto them which crosseth the same.” Now, if Ministers, because they are not Lawiers, might be unacquainted with the Laws and Constitutions of the Realm, this might be, yea, surely was the Case of many others: And if they might be in the Dark as to the Rights of the Parliament of Scotland, much more may it be supposed they were ignorant of the Rights and Privileges of the Parliament of England; and the *Solemn League* includes the Rights and Privileges of both. And as all Oaths are to be taken in Righteousness and Truth, so also in Judgment, *Jer. iv. 2.*

But further, as to sinful Terms of Communion, if, as is credibly reported, some of our Brethren make their *Abjuration* and *Testimony* a Term of Christian Communion, debarring all from the Table of our Lord, who do not approve of, and adhere to that Testimony, or who are not grieving for the Things complained of in it; then I dare affirm, this is a sinful Term of Communion: For, I am sure, Christ, the King of *Zion*, never intended any such Term of Communion to the Members of his Body. I know not certainly whether all our Brethren make this a Term of Christian Communion; but I have conversed with sundry, who, in my Opinion, are not only serious, but judicious Christians, and far from being Enemies to the Brethren, who affirm, at the last Sacrament in *Ab——y*, in the Evening of the Preparation-day, all were debarred from the Lord's Table who were not grieving for the Things complained of in the *Testimony*; and some of them declared, For this, they had not Freedom to join at that Occasion, tho' they had travell'd sundry Miles in order to partake, not having considered the Testimony fully at that Time. And I know for certain, by a Letter under one of the Brethren's Hand, that some of them will not allow their People to partake in the Lord's Supper with any Minister of this established Church, but in a Way of testifying against that Minister, if he either oppose their Testimony, or be so much as neutral in it. And also I'm credibly informed, at the last Sacrament at *Ab——ll*, all were debarred from the Lord's Table who did not adhere to that Testimony. And as some of the Brethren are said to make it a Term of Christian Communion; so it is very certain sundry of the People are perswaded, the *Testimony* is so much

much a Term of Christian Communion, that they refuse to join with any in Fellowship-meetings who do not approve thereof; tho', according to the Law of Christ, *doubtful Disputations*, as are many Things in the *Testimony*, are no proper Terms of Christian Communion, *Rom. xiv. 1.* And as sundry Things in it are not Fact, as hath been shewn, so many Things in it are above the Capacity of not a few serious Souls. And lately discoursing with one who was zealous for that *Testimony*, upon my asking, What he thought was meant by the *Protestation* taken against the *Resolutions*? He said, It was a Protest against every Thing that's Evil. And asking, What he thought was meant by the Toleration granted a little before the Revolution? He said, It was a Licence for People to live as they listed.

And 'tis much to be lamented People are running to such Extremes at this Day, that tho' such great Men as Mr. Robert Blair, Mr. David Dickson, Mr. Robert Douglas, Mr. James Wood, and the like, were alive, none of them, according to those that go to such Extremes, could be admitted to the *Lord's Table*, nor to a *Fellowship-meeting*, seeing all of them approved of the *publick Resolutions*. Nor could the great Mr. Durham either, seeing he was so unresolved anent them, that he had not Freedom to join with one Party more than another. Nor could any of those worthy Ministers of Christ, who were alive at the *Revolution*, whether *Protesters* or *Resolutioners*, *Indulged* or not *Indulged*, who had suffered so much for Christ and his Cause, by taking the spoiling of their Goods joyfully, by lying in Prisons and Banishment; seeing they preached under King James the Seventh his *Toleration*, and seeing they agreed at the *Revolution* to bury all their former Differences in the Grave of Oblivion. Now, for asserting, as above, in a Sermon, some took great Offence; but whether there was just Ground let others judge, when, at that very Time, some Separatists were extruding all those from *Fellowship-meetings*, who did not accede to the *Testimony*, yea, or should but attend on the Ministry of any that did not accede unto it. The Brethren, in their first *Testimony*, p. 53, 57. to which they adhere in their 2d, complain heavily of this Church, for usurping a legislative Power in, and Authority over the House of God, in making Laws and Constitutions that not only have no Warrant from the Word, but are contrary unto it; and they instance this as a clear Evidence thereof, That she has most unwarrantably proceeded to inflict one of the highest Censures of the Church, even

Excommunication from sealing Ordinances, upon such as have not Freedom to submit to the Ministry of those that are intruded upon them. But, are they not guilty here of the same Crime which they charge upon others, such, I mean, as make the Testimony a Term of Christian Communion, whereby all that cannot approve of the many disputable Things therein, have that high Sentence of Excommunication pronounced against them? Some cry out against Ministers for not testifying against the Evils of the Times; but, if ever Evil was to be testified against, this is an Evil of that Nature, being materially the pronouncing a Sentence of Excommunication against the Subjects of the King of Kings without sufficient Ground. And some affirm, 'tis a plain robbing him of his Supremacy, a pulling the Crown from off his Head, for any to make Laws and Terms of Communion to his Subjects which are contrary to his Statutes: And I dare say, never Law was more contrary to them than this, of making the Testimony a Term of Christian Communion; our sovereign Lord and supreme Law-giver never enacted any Thing like this. And if some, seeing this cannot be vindicated, do refuse the Charge, then there are abundance of habile unexceptionable Witnesses, who are friendly to the Brethren, to attest it; and was there but two or three judicious unprejudiced Persons, of undoubted Credit, to attest this, 'tis Proof sufficient, tho' the Person faulty, and many with him, should deny the Fact; else it would follow, a certain Professor, instead of being excommunicated, deposed or suspended, he should been assailable, however clear the Probation was.

The Generality of them that join the Brethren in adhering to their Testimony, cannot but sin in acting by the *implicite Faith* of Romanists, believing as the Brethren believe; for many of them own they never read the Testimony; many own they never read it all; and sundry of them own they do not understand many Things in it: And neither can they, as p. 73. where one of the Propositions of Professor Simson's Libel which they condemn is only in *Latin*. Again, not one of many can tell what the *Publick Resolutions* were; and the Brethren have not given any Account of them. Again, tho' the Abjuration-Oath is condemned as a publick National Sin, homologating the Union-constitution, yet they never tell how nor wherein it homologates that Constitution; and may be not one of an Hundred ever read that Oath. Again, they must believe the Parliament 1690 imposed the Oath of *Allegiance* in place of

any other Oaths imposed by Laws and Acts of preceeding Parliaments, designedly to exclude the Oath of the Covenant, which is not Fact; and not one of Five hundred may be ever saw that Act. Again, they must believe as the Church believes, when 'tis affirmed in their *Testimony*, p. 60. "Many valuable Pieces of Reformation were upon the Matter given up at the Revolution:" For the Brethren tell not what these many valuable Pieces of Reformation were; and for my Part I cannot guess at them: So of a great many other Things, yea, I may say of the most Things in their *Testimony*, which it is not possible for them to know and understand, having never read anent those disputable Points, nor seen such *Acts* of Parliaments and Assemblies, nor these Oaths which are mentioned therein. But, as all Oaths are to be sworn in Truth, Righteousness and Judgment, *Jer.* iv. 2. so all that adhere to any such publick *Testimony*, they sin against God, and harm their own Souls, if their Adherence be not in Truth, Righteousness and Judgment, or with Understanding. Besides, as has been shown already, and may be further shown, there are sundry Things in the *Brethrens Testimony* which are not Matter of Fact.

They say in their first *Testimony*, p. 24. "'Tis very dangerous to depart in the least from a *Testimony* that hath been given." And People would consider, 'tis as dangerous to adhere or accede to a *Testimony* which hath the least Thing in it they do not clearly understand: God never accepted of the Blind for Sacrifice. And our Brethren would do well seriously to consider what they say of an unwarrantable narrowing the Terms of Christian Communion in another Case, 1st *Test.* p. 58. namely, That "it is a Piece of Tyranny upon the Consciences of Men, vastly unbecoming a Church that bears the Name of Protestant: And as it is contrary unto the Command of the Head of the Church by the Apostle, 1 *Pet.* v. 3. Neither as being Lords over God's Heritage; so it is cross to one great End and Design of Church Government and Discipline, viz. the Edification of the Body of Christ."

The Apostle Peter says, He perceived that in every Nation he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him, *Acts* x. 34, 35. and consequently all such should be accepted of his Servants, and admitted to his Table. Now, may not one be a Fearer of God, and a Worker of Righteousness, and yet have Doubts anent the Publick Resolutions, Doubts anent the Lawfulness of accepting the Indul-

gence and Toleration, Doubts anent the Lawfulness of the *Abjuration*, Doubts anent excommunicating such as profess Repentance? and is not this an accusing of the King of Zion, for any to refuse Communion at his Table, or in any other Duty, with such as he allows Communion with himself? And, as all that adhere to the *Brethrens Testimony* must approve of their erecting themselves into a Presbytery, so, may not one be an eminent Servant of Christ, and yet disapprove of this unprecedented Step? And further, 'tis affirmed, and I suppose not without sufficient Ground, Even some of the Four Brethren wanted Clearness as to this for some Time after the other Three had constitute themselves into a Presbytery. The *Protesters* never made their *Protestation* a Term of Christian Communion; the Brethren of *Fife* and *Pertb* never made their Testimony a Term thereof: Yet now some are for shutting out all from the Table of the Lord, or Fellowship with his People in Ordinances, that do not approve of this *Testimony*.

And, *lastly*, Can our Brethren but think it would be too much for any four Men in another Church to take on them to draw up such a *System* for Terms of Christian Communion as is their *Act* and *Testimony*, allowing none to differ from them? and I dare say, they do not look on themselves to be infallible. As Mr. *Matber* says, in his History of *New-England*, L. 3. p. 12. "If any Faction of Men require the *Assent* and *Consent* of other Men to a vast Number of *disputable* and *uninstituted* Things, and it may be "a *Mathematical Falsbood* among the first of them, and "utterly renounce all Christian Communion with all that "shall not give that *Assent* and *Consent*; we look upon "these to be Separatists, we dare not be so narrow spirited: The Churches of *New-England* profess to make "only the *Substantials* of the *Christian Religion* to be the "Terms of our sacred Fellowship." Now, if I be not far mistaken, enough hath been said and made evident to scar any thinking Person from adopting that Testimony, and much more to scar from making it a Term of Christian Communion to all. And whether all our Brethren make their *Testimony* a Term of Christian Communion or not, yet it seems all of them make it a Term of Ministerial Communion; for in their *Act*, receiving Messieurs *Ralph Erskine* and *Thomas Mair*, their having declared their *Adherence to their Act and Testimony*, is given as a Ground why they unanimously received them as Members of their Presbytery.

Some

Some have exclaimed against the Church of *Scotland*, because, without sufficient Evidences of Repentance, at the Revolution she received into Ministerial Communion some who had conformed to Prelacy, and for continuing others in her Communion who have taught Error: But, can they be justified, who shall receive into *Ministerial Communion* one who has published Error, ever since not only of the Church, but also of the State, and Error which has a direct Tendency to involve these Lands, and keep them in Blood and Confusion perhaps from Generation to Generation? To say, *A Prelatick King or Magistrate* is but a nominal King or Magistrate, *Plain Reasons*, P. 120, 121. is a gross Error, an Error contrary to our National Covenants, and to both our older and later *Confessions of Faith*, to the Doctrine of all the reformed Churches, as 'tis contrary to the Word of God. And he who is thus to be received, is one who has been guilty of publishing the vilest Slanders upon the National Church, and has never made publick Profession of Repentance for that Doctrine or those Slanders, whatever his private Profession anent that Principle hath been, tho' it be Doctrine which, I doubt not, is very opposite to their Principles who are about to license him: Such a Person ought to be summered and wintered, after Profession of Repentance, before licensing of him. If a Deacon's Wife must not be a Slanderer, much less ought the meanest Office-bearer in the Church of Christ to be such: And seeing he is honoured so as first of all to be received on Trials for the holy Ministry, 'tis like the *ophthalmata* or Blemishes of their Administration who are to license him, may come to be as many as the Faults of others ere it be long.

27th *Object*. Such *Brethren* as have gone out to the Wilderness, making a Stand for Reformation, ought to be encouraged by going out unto and joining with them, the Threatning being awful against all such as come not out to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty *; especially, say some, when they have only made a Secession and not a Separation from this Church. *Answer*, 1. Before joining them, People ought seriously to weigh the Grounds on which those Brethren did make Secession, and still continue it when they have an opened Door to come in at, trying whether they might not have continued with, or might not come in to, the Church of *Scotland* without Sin; for if no sinful Term of Communion be required, then their Secession

sion cannot be justified, nor ought they to be joined with to
 the renting of the Body of Christ, which is judged to be
 the very Case here. 2. As to their making a Stand for Re-
 formation, I doubt not the Brethren would be glad of Re-
 formation; but 'tis a Question whether their Endeavours
 for Reformation had not been as acceptable to the Lord
 by staying with or coming in to the Church, appearing for
 it in a Way of Church-communion, as by Separation. It
 was a good Saying of one who was esteemed among the
 greatest Men in his Day, for *Holiness, Learning, Wisdom,*
Meekness, and other Qualities of an excellent Spirit, namely,
 the Reverend Jonathan Mitchel Pastor in Cambridge of New-
 England, when in a Sermon he said to this Purpose, "Se-
 "paration is a seeming Friend, but a secret fatal Enemy
 "to Reformation: Do not, in Pretence of avoiding Cor-
 "ruption, run into sinful Separation from any of the true
 "Churches of God, and what is good therein." *Matther's*
History of New-England, Book 4. p. 182. 3. As to those
 Brethren their being in the Wilderness, led to the Wilderness,
 or encamped in the Wilderness, as they speak. What their
 Wilderness is, as yet I know not, seeing still they have
 Access, if they please, to come in to God's Vineyard, to
 the Church of the living God, partaking of all her Pri-
 vileges. And, in 1733, some of them said as much as, Her Pri-
 vileges were such, that they were ready to seal them with
 their Blood; and, which I am far from grudging, they
 still enjoy their Benefices, having as numerous and more
 numerous Auditories as ever, without the least Molestation:
 Yea, I may say, such as continue in the Church contending
 against Defections, are rather in the Wilderness than they,
 being frowned upon, if not hated, by sundry who former-
 ly admired them, and would have plucked out their Eyes if
 possible to do them Service, being reckoned Men of lax
 Principles, and what not; and all because they have not
 Freedom to join the Brethren in their Separation. But, 4.
 As to the awful Threatning and Curse denounced against
 such as come not out to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty.
 That Scripture, *Judg. v. 23.* it is not, Curse ye Meroz, because
 he came not out to the Help of the Lord, but because he
 came not to the Help of the Lord. And there the Curse is as
 much against them that come not in to the Help of the Lord
 against the Mighty. And for such as have gone out from
 the Church of Scotland, they have not the Mighty to strive
 against; they may do what they please, enact, declare and
 justify in what Terms they please without Controul: But for
 such

such as continue in the Church, they may stand much in Need of Help, having sometimes a strong Party to contend against.

5. Whereas it is said, 'The Brethren have only made a *Secession*, and not a *Separation* from this Church. For my Part, 1. I cannot see but the *Secession* they have made is the same with a *Separation*, seeing they have separated from or left the Judicatories of this National Church. 2. If the Word *Secession* be taken in the Sense which *Durham* gives of it †, which I take to be the ordinary or common Sense thereof, namely, for a *local Removing upon some urgent lawful Occasion, spiritual or temporal, to another or better constitute Church*, then they have made no *Secession*; for they have not separated locally, as did *Lot* when he left *Sodom*, or as *Israel* when they removed from the Tents of *Korah*; seeing they still inhabit the same *Manses*, as well as enjoy the same *Benefices*. And, 3. Whereas the Word *Secession* is sometimes taken for a *Revolt* and *Mutiny*, many think they have made a *Secession* in that Respect: But as *Separation* may sometimes be without a *Secession*, so I humbly think this is the Brethrens Case. And, unless they were *Independents*, 'tis as inconsistent with their Principles to sit in *Sessions*, while these *Sessions* have not separated from the Church of *Scotland*, as it is, for them to come and sit in *Presbyteries* or other Judicatories; for surely *Kirk-sessions* are Judicatories of this National Church, owning their Subjection to her.

If for Ministers to withdraw from the Judicatories of a Church, and constitute themselves into a Judicatory, be not to separate from that Church from which they withdraw, then I know not what *Separation* is. *Separation* from a true Church of Christ, requiring no sinful Terms of Communion, as is the Church of *Scotland*, has always been and will be reckoned odious, being condemned in the Word of God: It seems therefore, tho' they are plainly for the Thing, yet they cannot endure the Name; and as our *Divines* distinguish between *negative* and *positive Separation*, so this is *positive Separation*, *Separation* in the worst and plainest Sense: And if in Sermons to tell People, that there is a Testimony emitted, which is the *Testimony of Jesus*, or the *Testimony of God*, and that People are not to halt between two Opinions, but if the Lord be God they must follow him, and if *Baal* be God then follow him, telling them also the Threatning we have, *Judges v. 23. is awful against such as*

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come

† On Rev. xviii. v. 4. p. m. 680.

come not out to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty, be not to preach Separation from the Ministers of the Church of Scotland who do not approve of their Testimony (and I know of none who approve of the whole of it) then I am much mistaken. Had the Brethren gone over to the Netherlands, and joined the Church of Christ in Holland, then that had been to make a Seceſſion from the Church of Scotland; or had they gone over to America, to France, Poland or Germany, and erected themselves into a Judicatory there, that had been to make a Seceſſion from her; but a Presbyterian Church within a Presbyterian Church, is Separation, or nothing can be such: And surely by their Conduct they are, at least, as much guilty of Separation as Mr. Hepburn or Mr. McMillan and their Followers; and yet Mr. Hog and Mr. Webster charge them as guilty of Schism and Separation. The Brethren in their first Testimony, P. 97. say, "A peaceable Departure from, or leaving the Communion of a Church, when there is just Cause for it, is not Schism." And this I readily grant; but I think their Departure from us, as 'tis without a just Cause, so it has been far from peaceable: Have they not whet their Tongue like a Sword, and bent their Bows to shoot their Arrows, even bitter Words? And, Have they not drawn their Pen, and dipt it in Gall, publishing it to the World, that their Mother at this Day is gone off from the Foundation; a Church, which countenances gross Errors, and erroneous Persons; a Church, whose Judicatories have done what in them lay to pull the Crown from Christ's Head, refusing to give him the Glory of his supreme Deity; a Church, which hath a special Mark of Antichrist, being sadly involved in the Guilt of denying the Son of God; a Church, which for a long Time hath been deeply engaged in a Course of Defection from the Lord; a Church, whose Judicatories are the Synagogues of Satan, as one lately asserted in his Sermon? Have they not done what in them lay by their Testimony, not only to cause Separation from her, but also to raise the Indignation of all the Churches of Christ against her? which is far enough from a peaceable Departure.

Indeed, one of our Brethren, in his Seceſſion from the present Judicatories of this Church, affirms, "He has not joined the four Brethren as they are a Presbytery or Judicatory separate from the Church of Scotland, but as they are a Part of the same Church — associate together, distinct from the present Judicatories of this Church;" and says, "By joining the Brethren, I intend and under-

stand

" stand no Withdrawing from Ministerial Communion with
 " any of the godly Ministers of this National Church, that
 " are groining under, or wrestling against the Defections of
 " the Times, even tho' they have not the same Light with
 " us in every Particular contained in the foresaid Testi-
 " mony : ——— So that, *adds he* (as an eminent Light in
 " this Church expresses it on another Occasion) *Here is no*
 " *separation from the Church of Scotland, either in her Do-*
 " *ctrine, Worship, Discipline or Government, but rather a*
 " *cleaving more closely thereto, by departing or going forth from*
 " *her Backslidings and Defections, as we are commanded by*
 " *the Lord, &c.*" But, how our Brother or any else can
 be a Part of the established Church of Scotland, as there he
 seems to own, who hath cast off and disowns her Judicato-
 ries, erecting himself with others into a distinct Judicatory
 from her, I know not; for, in my humble Opinion, this
 is plainly to separate from her.

And as for that eminent Light he speaks of, 'tis strange
 he neither mentions his Name nor the Place where these
 Words are to be found, that the Reader may see with his
 own Eyes. It would seem he was not so very fond of this;
 and indeed neither had he any Ground, because that emi-
 nent Light, *viz.* the Reverend Mr. *Alexander Shields*, in
 his Treatise on Church-Communion, or *Treatise against Sepa-*
ration from the Church of Scotland, from which these Words
 are cited, he is plainly against the Brethrens Secession.
 And even in Page 20. where these Words are to be found,
 he is against it, as is evident from his Words when given
 fully; for Mr *Shields's* Words run thus, " *This is no Se-*
 " *paration from the Church of Scotland, either in her Doc-*
 " *trine, Worship, Discipline or Government, but only a*
 " *departing, or going forth from her Sins, Backslidings and*
 " *Defections, as we are commanded by the Lord; and for a*
 " *Time only from some Congregations, because of these.*
 " *This is not a positive or active Separation from the*
 " *Church, casting at it as no Church, or defaming the Mi-*
 " *nistry thereof, or gathering new distinct Churches; only*
 " *a negative and passive Separation, refusing to follow the*
 " *declining Part of the Church holding on in their new*
 " *Course, and choosing rather to stand still and cleave to*
 " *that Part, tho' smaller, endeavouring to retain and main-*
 " *tain the covenanted Work of Reformation against Po-*
 " *pery, Prelacy, Erastianism and Sectarianism, Schism*
 " *and Defection.*" There Mr. *Shields* seems to speak of
 withdrawing, not from the Church in general, but from

some particular Congregations, because of their Sins, Backslidings and Defections, refusing to follow the declining Part of the Church, and cleaving to that Part, tho' smaller, which is endeavouring to maintain the covenanted Work of Reformation, which is surely Duty; but still without Separation or Seccession from that Church: Whereas the Brethrens Separation from the Church of Scotland is a *positive active* Separation from her, a *casting at her as no Church*, attended with a *daily defaming of her Ministry*, and a *gathering of new distinct Churches out of her*, or a gathering People from all Congregations to their Church, encouraging them to separate from their Ministers. A negative Separation is one Thing, and a positive Separation is another, as is shewn above, p. 9, 10. Had our Brother stood still, without acceding to the Brethren and joining with them in a Judicatory, guarding against defaming our Ministers, which mars the Success of the Gospel in their Hands, and had he abstained from having any Hand in gathering new distinct Churches, or from encouraging People to separate; then his Separation might been constructed to be only a negative Separation: But this is not the Case. And as for the above Treatise, which was written by that eminent Light Mr. *Shields*, and I know was recommended by our dear Brother the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* to some of his Parishioners, when at *Portmoak*, I wish all our Separatists, and others also, may read it seriously, hearkning to his solid Reasons against Separation; and, through the divine Blessing, our Divisions would soon come to a desirable End.

28th *Object*. For such as have separated to return to this Church, would be to bury their *Testimony* given against her Defections in former Times, at least till she confess her Faults, and Grievances be redressed. Answer 1. As to the Church her making Confession, I own 'tis Duty, wherein she is convinced she hath made Defection, to turn from it, and to return unto the Lord, by an ingenuous Confession, and unfeigned Repentance; yet, as that *Dutch Minister* Mr. *Brakel*, who had been very instrumental in Mr. *Renwick's* Ordination, said in a Letter to him from *Holland* *, " Sometimes Circumstances are such, that to press
" Confession in such a Case were the Height of Pride, at
" the least Imprudence; and to urge it on Innocents, is
" tyrannical." *Durham* says, " Repentance implies Con-
" viction; How hard is that? And shall the Church never
" attain

* *Renwick's Life*, P. 106.

"attain to Union till this be?" And he shews, if this had been the Mind of the Church and Servants of Christ, "there had never been publick Ecclesiastick, nor private Christian Peace in the Church." But then, 2. As to the redressing of Grievances, tho' it is to be wished all our Grievances were removed; yet, to delay Communion with a Church till all the Grievances complained of be redressed, hath neither Scripture Precept, Promise, nor Example to support it; this is to make new and unheard-of Terms of Communion, and, as one says, in a little Time would multiply Terms of Communion beyond the Capacity of Mens Judgment and Memory. Further, this would open a Door of perpetual Rents and Divisions; and, upon this Principle, there could never be Unity in the Church of Christ, till *we all come in the Unity of Faith, to the Spirits of just Men made perfect.* As Durham says †, "Union is not to be suspended upon Satisfaction; but it would rather be pressed, that Satisfaction may be attained." But, 3. Whereas 'tis said, This would be to bury their Testimony, should they come in and join the Church of Scotland, while she hath not confessed her Defections, nor are Grievances redressed. 1. If she require it as a Term of Communion, that they acknowledge any Offence in separating formerly, or that they renounce their Judgment, and condemn any Part of what they reckon a just Testimony, then I own the Objection would be of some Weight. But, 2. I humbly think, instead of requiring any such Term of Communion, the Church of Scotland will allow, that solemnly they declare their acceding to this Church shall not infer any Thing like a condemning or receding from their former Testimony against any Thing they looked upon as a Defection from any Piece of attained Reformation. And, 3. If willing to return to the Church of Scotland, then I'm apt to think her *Judicatories*, to which they might give in such Declarations subscribed, would allow the recording them, if in becoming Terms or Expressions, and also grant Extracts in due Form, which they might keep to shew for their Exoneration. And surely, if this would be a Burial of their former Testimony, then it would be a very honourable Burial to be laid up in the Registers of the Church of Scotland, which Posterity, or succeeding Generations, may see and improve.

29th Object. The Church of Scotland hath been hainously guilty in obtruding Pastors upon Christian Congregations,

one, and therefore should not be joined with. I think I said enough for Answer to this of obtruding Pastors, when instancing these Things which have been reckoned just and sufficient Ground for Separation, p. 29. &c. and therefore shall not insist upon it at any Length in this Place. Yet, as Mr. Hog says *, "It is not every Thing amiss in those Regards that affordeth Ground for dishaunting instituted Ordinances." When *Zacharias* executed the Priest's Office in the Order of his Course, and when Christ and his Apostles lived and joined with the *Jews* in publick Worship, there seem to have been gross Abuses in calling and admitting Men to the Office of the Priesthood; particularly as to the Chief Priest's Office, for that was gotten by Moyer or Bribery. Hence, *Luke* iii. 2. we read of *Annas* and *Cajaphas* their being High Priests; whereas the Word of God allowed but of one High Priest at a Time: And *Luke* xi. 49. there 'tis said, *Cajaphas* was High Priest that Year. 'Tis thought the *Romans* had either turned off *Annas* from the Priesthood, and set up his Son-in-law *Cajaphas* in his Place, or that they exercised that Office annually *per vicis*, one having that high Place this Year, and another the next Year: Or some think the one might be Deputy to the other, or the Office of the High Priest might be conferred, just as the *Romans* pleased, for shorter or longer Space. But, whatever was in the Case, here was a lamentable Corruption in the Priest's Office; yet *Zacharias* is commended for staying in the Church, and executing the Priest's Office in the Order of his Course. But I enlarge not further upon this; only, as sometime formerly I affirmed and endeavoured to prove that the Peoples Right of electing their Pastors is a Presbyterian Principle founded upon the Word of God, so, to all the Testimonies I then adduced, I add one Testimony more to show I have not been singular in what I then advanced; and this is the Testimony of Bishop *Burnet*, in the last Volume of the *History of his own Times*, where, speaking of the Act restoring Patronages in 1712, he says, "It was set up by the Presbyterians, from their first Beginning, as a Principle, That Parishes had from Warrants in Scripture a Right to chuse their Ministers, so that they had always look'd on the Right of Patronages as an Invasion made on that." Once, again, and a third Time, I have lately seen it published, That the Church of *Scotland* in general, and the great Mr. *Knox* and some other of our Reformers in particular, affirmed the Election

* *Casnist. Essay*, p. 60.

lection of Ministers belongs to the Pastors or Presbytery; because *Calderwood*, p. 47. says, "Mr. Knox and others, being appointed to conceive the Heads pertaining to the Jurisdiction of the Kirk, they affirmed, The Kirk had the Election, Examination and Admission of them that are to be admitted to the Ministry, or other Functions of the Kirk, &c." But, as is clearly shown in the *Search*, p. 92, 93, 94. that Citation from *Calderwood* says nothing against the Peoples Right; for the Question at that Time was not, Whether the Presbytery or People should have the Election of Pastors, and of other Church-officers? but the Question was, Whether the Election of Pastors and other Church-officers belonged to the Civil or to the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction? And, if any desire to be further informed anent this, they may read the above-cited Pages.

Here I might have noticed another Mistake of our Brethren, in their first *Testimony*, p. 32 where, speaking of the good Laws, Civil and Ecclesiastick, made in that extolled Period between 1638 and 1650, assert what is not Matter of Fact, when they say, "The Settlement of Ministers was appointed with the Call and Consent of the Congregation concerned." Tho' in that Period *Settlements* were to be with Consent of the Congregation, yet 'tis a Mistake to say they were appointed to be with the Call thereof: For tho' the Assembly 1638 allowed that no Man was to be intruded contrary to the Will of the Congregation, yet the Act of Assembly 1642, whereby the Presbytery was obliged to give a List of six Persons to the Patron, all willing to accept of his Presentation, to which List the most or best Part of the Congregation was to consent, seems to have been the Method of settling Ministers from 1642 to 1649, which in a great Measure was a Robbing the People of their Right to call their Pastors: And, if this was a Fault to be testified against in 1732, it could not be a Virtue in 1649. And tho' in that 32d p. they thus assert, yet, p. 57. they call it a regular Call to the Ministry, when the Call is by the Judgment of the Presbytery and Consent of the Congregation. But, according to them, 'tis very uncertain who are to be the Callers of Gospel-Ministers: For, in the 128th p. of their second *Testimony*, they assert and declare, "That Ministers, and other Office-bearers in the Church, ought to be set over Congregations by the Call and Consent of the Majority of such in these Congregations who are admitted to full Communion with the Church in all her Sealing Ordinances; and that there should be no Pre-
"ference

“ference of Voices in this Matter upon the account of
 “any secular Consideration.” For as there *Callers* and
Consenters seem to be different, so 'tis a Question, whether
 by *Callers* they mean *Male* Communicants, and by *Consenters*
Females; or whether by *Callers* they mean the *Elders*,
 and by *Consenters* the rest of the People that have been ad-
 mitted to Sealing Ordinances; or whether by *Callers* they
 mean *Elders* and *Deacons*, and by *Consenters* all else that
 have been admitted to the Table of the Lord: For tho'
 they do not admit of Preference of Voices in this Matter
 upon any secular Consideration, yet, for any Thing asser-
 ted there, they may admit of Preference of Voices upon
 Ecclesiastical Considerations. And, if this be their Opini-
 on, then indeed, as they say their Sentiments here are a-
 greeable to the Acts of Assembly, so particularly they a-
 gree with the Act of Assembly 1649; but then I humbly
 think they are not founded upon the Word in this Parti-
 cular.

Lastly, It is objected by some, This Church ought never
 to be joined with, in regard she hath owned and owns the
 Authority of Prelatick Kings, and Kings who are sworn
 to maintain Prelacy in *England*; Kings that have never
 taken our Covenants, &c. which Presbyterians in former
 Times would never done. Once I designed to pass this Ob-
 jection entirely; yet, considering the Author of *Plain Rea-*
sons not only terms a *Prelatick King* or Magistrate a *no-*
minal Magistrate, p. 121. but also intimates that no Magi-
 strate is to be owned till once he take, swear and subscribe
 the Covenants National and Solemn League, and be of the
 Communion of this Church as established in 1649, asserting,
 That to own any other Magistrate is a downright relin-
 quishing and abandoning Reformation-principles and fun-
 damental Laws, p. 238. spending a great Part of his Book
 in pleading that the Principles and Practice of Separatists,
 the Followers of Mr. *M^cMillan*, are here agreeable to the
 Principles and Practice of our Reformers, and to the
 Judgment of this Church in that reforming Period
 from 1638 to 1649, and also to the Sentiments of the
Martyrs from 1660 to the Revolution, p. 235, 236, 238,
 241, &c. Considering also the Conduct of some others
 in later Times, however opposite our Brethren them-
 selves are to that Principle, I humbly think it may not be
 inexpedient nor unnecessary to insist upon it at some more
 Length, endeavouring to open the Eyes of some honest
 People who are prejudiced against Church and State upon
 such

such Accounts. And, for *Answer*, 1. 'Tis Matter of Lamentation there have been so many *Separatists* in our Land, who have never owned the Authority of our Kings since the *Revolution*; never owned the *Civil Government* more than the *Ecclesiastical*. 2. As to the heavy Complaints, That our Kings have not taken the *Covenants* since the *Revolution*, which is a Step of sad Detection, say our Separatists, seeing our Parliament 1649, and the Church also at that Time, declared, before any of our Kings be admitted to the Exercise of the Regal Power, they shall swear and subscribe the *Covenants*, as was done accordingly when *Charles II.* was crowned King at *Scoon*. And as *Plain Reasons* cites that Act with Approbation, p. 227. so the Brethren in their second *Testimony*, p. 22. commend that Act of Parliament, transcribing a good Part of it, giving it the Epithet of *Laudible*: But, in my humble Opinion, it was a very bad and unjustifiable Act; which is evident, 1. from this, That it declares 'tis necessary that King and People be of one perfect Religion, of one true Religion, or perfectly of one Religion. This, in my Opinion, is directly opposite to that Article of our *Confession*, in which 'tis affirmed, "In fidelity, or Difference in Religion, doth not make void the Magistrate's just and legal Authority, nor free the People from their due Obedience to him." No doubt it is desirable that King and People be of one Religion; but this is not necessary to constitute the Relation of King and Subjects. 2. To me it seems a little hard, as by that Act, to oblige the King to swear not only for himself, but also for his Successors, when none could tell who they might be. 3. That he should swear never to endeavour any Alteration of the Acts securing our Religion: For some of these Acts stood very much in need of Alteration; as particularly the Act of Parliament 1592, which, tho' a good Act in the Main, yet had sundry Things in it very bad, as hath been shown already. 4. That Act seems to have been bad, in regard it obliged the King to take a most illimited Oath, seeing he is sworn for himself and his Successors to agree to all Acts of Parliament injoining the *Covenants*, and fully establishing Presbyterian Government, &c. for that Oath tells not whether it was meant of Acts already made or to be made. And by the Oath administered to King *Charles II.* at *Scoon*, it seems it included both: For, by his Oath at that Time, he was obliged to swear, saying, "I for myself and Successors shall consent and agree to all Acts of Parliament injoining the *National Covenant*, and

" the *Solemn League and Covenant*; ——— And that I shall
 " give my Royal Assent to all Acts and Ordinances of Par-
 " liament, passed or to be passed, injoining the same in
 " my other Dominions." Here the King is sworn to what

neither he nor the Imposers of that Oath could know what.
 5. The obliging him to take the *National Covenant*, in my
 Opinion, was to found Dominion upon Grace: For, as
 noticed above, I see not how any Man could swear it but
 such as had Grace, and a full Assurance thereof. And it
 seems *Messieurs Thomas Linning, Alexander Shields and*
William Roid, have been of this Opinion, *That none but*
such as have Grace should take the Covenant: For in that
 large Paper given in to the Assembly 1690, in their Propo-
 sal for renewing the Covenants, they say, " Humbly moving
 " that none be forced to swear and subscribe the same, or
 " so much as admitted to it, except they be such as may
 " be judged in Charity to have a competent Knowledge
 " and Sense of the Sins and Duties thereof." Now I think
 'tis only gracious Persons that have a Sense of Sin and Duty
 upon their Spirits. 6. To me it was a very bad Act, seeing
 tho' the King had the Temptation of a Crown and King-
 dom, yet he behoved to swear, at taking this solemn Oath,
 That he was *not moved with any worldly Respect*. Strange,
 to oblige a King to take that Covenant else he shall never
 be King, and yet oblige him to swear he is not moved
 from any worldly Respect in taking thereof! This, in my
 humble Opinion, required the largest Measure of Grace.

3. As to the Church of *Scotland* her owning the Autho-
 rity of Prelarick Kings, and Kings who, instead of taking
 the Covenants, have sworn to maintain Prelacy in *England*.
 Lown this is Truth; but 'tis what we cannot help: And 'tis
 good our Kings, by their Coronation-oath, are as much
 obliged to maintain *Presbytery* in *Scotland* as *Prelacy* in *Eng-
 land*. And for us to own the Authority of such Kings, is
 not in the least contrary to Presbyterian Principles. Did
 not the Church of *Scotland*, in all Times since the Union
 of the Crowns of *Scotland* and *England* in 1603, own the
 Authority of such Kings?

Now, 1st, Whereas such Separatists as object against
 owning a Prelarick King, or such as have not sworn our Co-
 venants, boast of having all our Reformers upon their Side
 of the Question, and the great Mr. *Knox* in particular; I
 shall endeavour to show, our Reformers their Principles and
 Practice were diametrically opposite to that of our Separat-
 ists. And this is evident to a Demonstration, from the Ac-
 count

count we have of these in the *History of the Reformation*, commonly called *Knox his History*; as particularly from that Letter our Reformers sent to the Popish Queen Regent from *Pertb*, the 22d of *May* 1559, P. m. 138. in which our Reformers promised all due Obedience to the Authority of the King, Queen and Regent, tho' these Rulers were *Popish* as well as *Prelatick*, might they but have the free Exercise of the true Religion: And when at that Time the Reformers demand that *Pertb* should be rendered up, P. 146. they cried with one Voice, "*Cursed be they that seek Effusion of Blood; let us possess Christ Jesus and the Benefit of his Gospel, and none within Scotland shall be more obedient Subjects than we shall be.*" Yea, so loyal were they, that at this very Time, tho' they were convinced the Queen Regent was dealing deceitfully with them, and that she would not keep her Engagements; yet then their Preachers, as *John Willock* and *John Knox*, to stop the Mouth of the Adversary who charged them with Rebellion, most earnestly requested them to accept of the Terms offered, and so to suffer her Hypocrisy to discover itself. And when Queen *Mary* and King *Francis* had sent over Letters from *France*, in which they charged the Reformers, as intending not Religion but the Subversion of their Authority, they say, P. 157. "These Letters did not a little grieve us, who most unjustly were accused; for never a Sentence of the Narrative was true, &c." And, in their Answer to them, say, "As to the Obedience of our Sovereign's Authority in all civil and politick Matters, we are and shall be as obedient as any other of your Majesty's Subjects within your Realm." And, in their Agreement at the *Links of Leith*, *July* 24th 1559, P. 163. in one of these Articles 'tis said, "*Item, the said Lords of the Congregation, and all the Members thereof, shall remain obedient to our Lord and Lady's Authority, and to the Queen Regent in their Place; and shall obey all Laws and laudible Customs of this Realm, as they were used before the moving of this Tumult and Controversy, excepting the Cause of Religion, which shall be hereafter specified.*"

And when the Queen Regent had complained of the Ministers and Preachers, that they spoke irreverently of Princes in general, and of her in particular, P. 179 the Author of that History says, "Because thus Occasion is laid against God's true Ministers, we cannot but witness what Course and Order of Doctrine they have kept, and yet keep in that Point." And then he says, "*In publick Prayers they*"

" recommend to God all Princes in general, and the Magistrates
 " of this our native Realm in particular: In open Audience
 " they declare the Authority of Princes and Magistrates to be of
 " God; and therefore they affirm, That they ought to be ho-
 " noured, feared and obeyed, even for Conscience sake, pro-
 " vided that they command nor require nothing expressly repugn-
 " ing to God's Commandment and plain Will revealed in his
 " holy Word."

And when (I think in 1559) a Proclamation was emitted
 by the Queen Regent, in which the Reformers, or the
 Lords of the Congregation, were charged with a Design of
 casting off Authority, the Lords, in their Declaration against
 that Proclamation, for their own Vindication, say, P. 188.
 " We offer and we perform all Obedience which God hath
 " commanded, and we deny neither Toll, Tribute nor
 " Fear to her nor Officers: We only bridle her blind Rage,
 " in which she would erect and maintain Idolatry, and
 " would murder our Brethren who refuse the same. —
 " Neither yet fear we in this present Day, that against us
 " she maketh a malicious Lie, where that she sayeth, that
 " it is not Religion we go about, but a plain Usurpation of
 " Authority: God forbid that such Impiety should enter
 " into our Hearts, that we should make his holy Religion a
 " Cloke and Covertour of our Iniquity. From the Begin-
 " ning of this Controversy 'tis evidently known what have
 " been our Requests, which, if the rest of the Nobility and
 " Commonality of Scotland will cause to be performed unto
 " us, if then in us appear any Sign of Rebellion, let us be
 " reputed and punished as Traitors, &c." And, at the
 Time when they deposed or turned the Queen Regent from
 the Administration, it was not in the least because of her
 being Popish, nor because she would not profess the true
 Religion with her Subjects, as the Author of *Plain Reasons*
 seems to represent the Matter, P. 222. No; but because
 she was an Enemy to the Commonwealth, and an Oppressor
 of the Subjects; for still they owned the King and Queen's
 Authority, and they suspended or deposed her in the Name
 of their sovereign Lord and Lady, who were Popish, she
 having acted contrary to their Will.

Further, that our Reformers were of as different Prin-
 ciples from our Separatists upon this Point, as the East is
 opposite to the West, is evident from what they assert in
 the 24th Article of our old *Confession of Faith*, which, at the
 Reformation, was approved and professed by all the Pro-
 testants in the Land, and ratified both by Church and State;

In which Article, speaking of Civil Magistrates, they say,
 " We further confess and acknowledge, that such Persons
 " as are placed in Authority are to be loved, honoured,
 " feared, and holden in most reverend Estimation, be-
 " cause they are the Lieutenants of God, in whose Session
 " God himself doth sit and judge. — And further, we
 " affirm, That whosoever deny unto them their Aid, Coun-
 " sel and Comfort, while the Princes vigilantly travel in
 " the executing of their Office, that the same Men deny
 " their Help, Support and Counsel to God, who, by the
 " Presence of his Lieutenant, craveth it of them." And
 when was this Confession composed, and thus ratified, but
 when we had a Popish Sovereign upon the Throne, viz.
 July 17, 1560? So our Reformers could never dream that
 a prelatick King is a nominal King, as some *Separatists* talk.
 And it concerns them to consider, whether it be not down-
 right Perjury in them, to deny the Authority of such Kings
 as have rul'd over us since the *Revolution*; for this Confes-
 sion of Faith is sworn to in our National Covenant, as is
 owned by all; seeing, by that Confession, such as are placed
 in Authority over a People, *are to be loved, honoured, feared,*
and to be holden in most reverend Estimation, and to be aided,
while they vigilantly travel in executing their Office. And
 then Church and State were of the same Principle with the
Westminster Assembly, which asserts, *That Infidelity or Dif-*
ference in Religion, &c. There is not a Word indeed in
 either of these Confessions of *Hereditary Right*, or of a Na-
 tion's being obliged to choose any that are not of their Re-
 ligion; yet, being invested with legal Authority, the Au-
 thority of such is to be owned, and they are to be obeyed,
 as if they were of the same Religion with us in all Points,
 while defending us in our Rights and Privileges, according
 to their Coronation-Oath; and even every Breach of that
 will not loose Subjects from their Obedience.

Again, the Council of *Scotland*, in Answer to Queen *Eli-*
sabeth, who complained that the Peace agreed to at *Leith*
 had not been ratified by our Queen, says, " Our Obedi-
 " ence bindeth us not only reverently to speak and write
 " of our Sovereign, but also to judge and think, &c." And Mr. *Knox*, in his first Reasoning with Queen *Mary*,
 after her coming from *France*, says, " I think, and am sure-
 " ly perswaded, that your Majesty hath had, and present-
 " ly hath, as unfeigned Obedience of such as profess Christ
 " Jesus within this Realm, as ever your Father or Proge-
 " nitors had of these that are called *Bishops*." P. 311.

And

And as our Reformers in general, so the great Mr. Knox in particular, he was of the same Mind in every Respect with others in this Point, as is evident from his Letter to the Queen Regent, dated October 26, 1559, where he says, "My Tongue did both perswade and obtain, that your Authority and Regimen should be obeyed in all Things lawful, till you declare yourself an open Enemy to this Commonwealth, as now, alas, ye have done." P. 192. Moreover, when the Nobility and others were about to suspend the Queen Regent from the Exercise of Authority, John Knox his Mind being asked, he said, "First, That the Iniquity of the Queen Regent and Disorder ought in nowise to withdraw neither our Hearts, neither yet the Hearts of other Subjects, from the Obedience due unto our Sovereign. Secondly, That if we deposed the said Queen Regent rather of Malice and private Envy, than for the Preservation of the Commonwealth, and for that her Sins appeared uncurable, that we should not escape God's just Judgment, howsoever that she had deserved Rejection from Honours. And, Thirdly, He required, That no such Sentence should be pronounced against her, but that upon known and open Repentance, and upon her Conversion to the Commonwealth, and Submission to the Nobility, Place shall be granted unto her of Regress to the same Honours from the which, for just Causes, she justly might be deprived."

Indeed he and our other Reformers were of this Judgment, That if a Sovereign break his Coronation-oath, oppose himself to the true Religion, and turn a declared Enemy to the Commonwealth, in that Case the Nobility or States, with the People of the Realm, may justly oppose themselves to such a Sovereign, and deprive them of Authority; as is evident from that long Conference between Lethington, Mr. Knox and others, at the Assembly 1564. And as Knox, so likewise Calvin was of the same Mind: Hence, *Instit. L. 4. C. 20. Sect. 25.* he says, *Verum si in Dei verbum respicimus, &c.* "But, if we look to the Word of God, it will lead us further, that we be subject not only to the Government of these Princes which execute their Office towards us well, and with such Faithfulness as they ought, but also of all them who, by what Mean soever it be, have the Dominion in Possession, &c." —

Now, from what hath been said, the impartial World may judge whether or not these great Restorers of Presby-

tery, viz. *Calvin* and *Knox*, as the Author of *Plain Reasons* calls them, were upon his Side of this Question or not. And so much for the Inconsistency of the present Principles and Practice of Separatists, with the Principles and Practice of our Reformers.

I go on, *secondly*, To shew how opposite the Principle of these Separatists is to the Principle of the Church of *Scotland* in that Period which they magnify so highly, viz. between 1638 and 1649 *inclusive*; for, whatever they pretend during that Period, she owned the Authority of a Prelatick King, and a King who had never taken the Covenants: And this is evident from sundry Things, as from the Supplication of the Assembly 1638 to the King's Majesty, and also from the Supplication of the Assembly 1639 to the King's Commissioner and Lords of Secret Council; also from their *Supplication* to the King's Majesty that Year: So the Answer of the Assembly 1641 to the King's Letter; again the *Supplication* of the Assembly 1641 to the King's Majesty. Tho' the King had told that Assembly, in his Letter sent by his Commissioner the Earl of *Dunfermline*, that, as I noticed formerly, he desired and was designed to govern the Kirk of *England* by her own Canons and Constitutions; yet in that *Supplication* they express the greatest Loyalty imaginable. So the Assembly 1643, in Answer to the King's Letter. Again, the Assembly 1645, in their humble *Remonstrance* to the King's most excellent Majesty, in which, tho' they freely and faithfully tell him of his "being guilty of shedding the Blood of many Thousands
" of his best Subjects, of permitting the Mass and other
" Idolatry both in his own Family and in his Dominions,
" of profaning the Sabbath by his *Book of Sports*, of shutting
" his Ears from the just Desires of his humble Subjects;
In which also the Assembly tells him of his disregarding their many humble Addresses: Yet at the same Time, notwithstanding of all these, they assert their *Loyalty and faithful Subjection* to him, affirming their Loyalty was not blotted out of their Hearts; with a good deal more to that Purpose.

Again, the Assembly 1646, in their Letter to the King's Majesty, tell how they had "constantly laboured to ap-
" prove themselves in all Loyalty to his Majesty, declar-
" ing they were resolved to walk still after the same Rule,
" continuing their Prayers for him." And the Assembly 1647, in the 11th Paragraph of their *Declaration to their Brethren of England*, say, "Nor doth our Zeal for the
" Covenant

" Covenant and Presbyterial Government abate or diminish any Thing at all from our Loyalty and Duty to the King's Majesty, altho' Incendiaries and Enemies spare not to reproach this Church and Kingdom with Disloyalty." And the Assembly 1648, in their *humble Supplication* to the King of the Date *August* 12th, as they give him the Title of *most excellent Majesty*, so (tho' they deal freely with him in telling him his Sin and Duty) they say, " The Searcher of Hearts knows, and our Consciences bear Record unto us, that we bear in our Spirits these humble and dutiful Respects to your Majesty that loyal Subjects owe to their native Sovereign." Indeed at that Time, being turned off from the Exercise of his Kingly Power by *Cromwel* and the *Sectarians*, they were not for restoring him thereto till he should give Security for Religion; yet at that very Time they say, " We take it as a great Mercy, and Door of Hope, that God still inclines the Hearts of all his Servants to pray for your Majesty." This was when the King was in the Hands of those *Sectaries* that took away his Life, which the Assembly 1649, in their *Seasonable Warning*, expressly calls *Murder*: And tho' the Assembly 1649, in that *Seasonable Warning* of the Date *August* 27th, declare themselves to be of the same Mind with the Assembly 1648 as to the Admission of King *Charles II.* to the Exercise of the Regal Government; yet that very Assembly, notwithstanding of all the bad Things they laid to his Charge, as they begin their Letter to him with these Words, *Most gracious Sovereign, we your Majesty's most humble and loyal Subjects*; so again they subscribe themselves at the Close, *We your Majesty's most loyal Subjects, &c.* Now, their designing themselves once and again his Subjects, his loyal Subjects, and most loyal Subjects, giving him the Epithet of their *Most gracious Sovereign*, was either an Owning of his Authority, or else it was hateful Dissimulation, and a giving flattering Titles; condemned, *Job xxxii. 21, 22.* And in that Letter they own the Authority of his Father *Charles I.* while alive, for all the bad mischievous Things he had done to the Church of *Scotland*, when they say, " We do from our Hearts abominate and detest that wicked Fact of the *Sectaries* against the Life of your Royal Father our late Sovereign." And here I might also noticed, that the Commission 1648, which was unanimously approved by the Assembly 1649, in their *Solemn Acknowledgment of publick Sins and Engagement to Duties*, assert their Loyalty to the King, saying, " As we
 " have

“ have been always loyal to our King, so we shall still en-
 “ deavour to give unto God that which is God’s, and unto
 “ *Cesar* that which is *Cesar’s*. ” There they own a Pre-
 latick King, calling him *our King*, and profess their Loy-
 alty to him.

Now, from these Things, ’tis pretty evident the Church
 of *Scotland* from 1638 to 1649 was far from being of the
 same Sentiments with our Separatists, the Followers of
 Mr. *M. Millan*, as to the *Civil Government*.

I proceed now in the *third Place* to show, that the Prin-
 ciples of *Separatists*, the Followers of Mr. *M. Millan*, are
 as inconsistent with the Principles of many of the most ju-
 dicious among the Martyrs, who suffered from 1660 to the
 Revolution, as they are with our Reformers and with this
 Church from 1638 to 1650, in this Point of owning the
 Authority of such Kings as have swayed the Sceptre over
 us since that Time (tho’ they speak as if all the Martyrs in
 that Period had been of their Mind) as is evident from the
 Testimonies and last Speeches of those Martyrs. And to
 begin with the Speech of the first of these, *viz.* the noble
 Marquis of *Argyle*, who suffered *May 27th 1661*. As in it
 he vindicates himself from having the least Hand in what he
 called the horrid and execrable Murder of King *Charles I.*
 so in it he prayeth for King *Charles II.* who was then upon
 the Throne, saying, “ I pray the Lord to preserve his Ma-
 “ jesty, and pour out his best Blessings on his Person and
 “ Government.” And the Reverend Mr. *Guthrie*, who was
 the next that suffered, *June 1st 1661*, when speaking of
 the Things for which they had sentenced him, says, “ I
 “ bless God they are not Matters of Compliance with
 “ Sectaries, or Designs or Practices against his Majesty’s Per-
 “ son or Government, or the Person or Government of his
 “ Royal Father ; my Heart (I bless God) is conscious unto
 “ no Disloyalty, nay, loyal I have been, and I commend
 “ it unto you to be loyal and obedient in the Lord : True
 “ Piety is the Foundation of true Loyalty.” Lord *Wari-
 foun* was the third, he suffered *July 22d 1663* ; and having
 vindicated himself from having the least Access to his late
 Majesty’s Death, or to the Change of Government, says,
 “ I pray the Lord to preserve our present King his Majesty,
 “ and to pour out his best Blessing upon his Royal Poste-
 “ rity.” The next Ten Persons, who suffered *December*
7th 1666, *viz.* *John McCulloch* of *Barholm*, Captain *Andrew*
Arnot, *John Gordon* of *Knockbrenn*, and *Robert Gordon* his
 Brother, &c. in their joint Testimony say, “ We are con-
 D d “ damned

"demned by Men, and esteemed by many as Rebels against
 "the King, whose Authority we acknowledge: But this
 "is our Rejoicing, the Testimony of our Consciences, &c."
 All those owned King *Charles* then reigning for their law-
 ful Sovereign, tho' a Prelatick King, and one that had
 broken the Covenant, and made the Act *Rescissory*. Mr.
James Robertson Preacher of the Gospel, who suffered
 December 14th 1666, in his *Testimony* he adheres to what
 the former Ten had left behind them concerning the common
 Cause, telling, "That with the same Breath he sware to
 "preserve Religion, he also sware to defend the King in
 "his Authority." *John Neilson* of *Corsack* says, "I am
 "condemned, I shall not say how unjustly, as a Rebel a-
 "gainst Man; but the Lord God of Gods knoweth that it
 "is not for Rebellion against God, &c." *George Crawford*
 died that same Day with *Neilson* of *Corsack*, and he expres-
 ly owns the King's Authority. That eminent Person Mr.
Hugh McKail, execute December 22d 1666, he indeed is nor
 so express upon this Particular; yet affirms of these then
 condemned as Rebels against the King, "That they were
 "such as had spent much Time in Prayer for him, and
 "do more sincerely wish his Standing, and have endeavoured
 "it more by this late Action so much condemned, than the
 Prelates by condemning them to Death." *John Woodrow*
 declares he had no Intention of Wrong to the King's Per-
 son or Authority in going to *Pentland*. *Ralph Shields* owned
 the King's Authority, wishing his Majesty all Welfare in
 this Life, and that which is to come. *Humphry Colquhoun*
 neither owns nor disowns it. *John Wilson* owns the King's
 Authority, and exhorted all to stand fast in all the Dunes
 they were sworn to in the Covenant, both toward God, their
 King, and one another. Now, of all these Martyrs, whose
Testimonies are recorded in *Naphthali*, not one of them de-
 nied that King's Authority they suffered under, yea all of
 them own it in express Terms, if it be not three or four.

Mr *James Mitchell* suffered June 18th 1678. And in
 his *Testimony*, as he approves of *Lex Rex*, *The Causes of*
God's Wrath, the *Apologetical Relation*, *Jus Populi*, &c.
 "as orthodox and consonant to the received Principles
 "and Doctrine of the Church of Scotland;" So in these
Pieces there is much condemning all that reject Civil Au-
 thority barely because the Sovereign is of Prelatick Prin-
 ciples; or not of our Religion. Hence the Author of the
Apologetical Relation says, p. 155. "There is a great Dif-
 ference between a War raised of Purpose to force the
 "supreme

"supreme Magistrate to be of the same Religion with the
 "Subject, or else to dethrone him, and a War raised to
 "defend that Religion which both Magistrate and Subject
 "owneth."

James Learmont, suffering September 27th 1678, says,
 "I give my Testimony against that Calumny cast upon
 "Presbyterians, That they are seditious and disloyal Per-
 "sons; the which Asperſion I do abhor: Therefore I ex-
 "hort all People, that they will shew Loyalty to the King,
 "and all lawful Magistrates, in all their just and lawful
 "Commands, in so far as their Commands agree with the
 "Word of God."

Mr. John Kid Preacher of the Gospel, suffering August
 14th 1679, says, "But for Rebellion against his Majesty's
 "Person or lawful Authority, the Lord knows my Soul
 "abhorreth it Name and Thing. Loyal I have been, and
 "wills every Christian to be so; and I was ever of this
 "Judgment to give to *Cesar* the Things that are *Cesar's*,
 "and to God the Things that are God's."

Mr. John King Preacher of the Gospel, suffering the same
 Day with *Mr. John Kid*, says, "The Lord knows, who
 "is the Searcher of Hearts, that neither my Design nor
 "Practice was against his Majesty's Person and just Go-
 "vernment, but I always intended to be loyal to lawful
 "Authority in the Lord. I thank God, my Heart does not
 "condemn me of any Disloyalty; I have been loyal, and
 "do recommend it to all to be obedient to higher Powers
 "in the Lord." And the last five Persons who suffered at
Magus-moor, December 25th 1679, in their last Testimony
 say, "We give our Testimony against that Calumny cast
 "upon the Presbyterians, That they are not loyal to their
 "King; which Asperſion, as false, we abhor: So we de-
 "fire you all to obey your King in all his lawful Com-
 "mands, according as ye are bound in the Word of God
 "and your Covenants." And all those Declarations of
 Loyalty were to a Prelatick King, who did not regard the
 Covenants.

But then, as to the Martyrs recorded in the *Cloud of Wit-
 nesses*, who suffered from 1680 to the *Revolution*, I own
 indeed generally they denied the King's Authority; but yet
 in this they were not all of one Mind, as that excellent Per-
 son *John Wilson* Writer in *Lanark*, who suffered 1683, said,
 "He could not see thro' the Denial of it, viz. of the
 "King's Authority *," tho' his Words are perverted in
 the

D d 2

* *Wodrow's Hist.* Vol. 2. P. 301.

the *Cloud of Witnesses*. Again, Mr. *John Dick*, suffering 1684, he owned the King's Authority conform to the Word of God, owning he had Power to govern for the Glory of God and the Good of his People. And Captain *John Paton*, who also suffered that Year, when asked before the Council, If he owned the King's Authority? answered, He own'd all Authority according to the Word of God.

And sundry of these who denied the King's Authority, as the Reverend Mr. *Donald Cargill* and others, they qualified their Denial thereof, denying it *as it was established in the Supremacy and explanatory Act*; and Mr. *Cargill* said, *That is the Magistracy I have rejected*: He disowned Authority, because the Supremacy was declared to be *an inherent Right and essential to the Crown*. And sundry thought the King's Authority could not be owned, because of his Perfidy in breaking the Covenants which he had taken, and his Coronation-oath, and because of his persecuting and oppressing the Lord's People: Some distinguished between Authority and the Abuse thereof, others did not. And here I might have cited many others, as that eminent Servant of the Lord Mr. *Robert M'Ward*, who, if he was not a Martyr, yet suffered much for Christ; who, when sifted before the Parliament July 6th 1661, besought, "That he might not be looked upon as a disloyal Person, either as to his Principles or Practice;" Declaring how loyal he had been, telling the Parliament also, he had "not spoken any Thing unto them to that Purpose, if the Credit of his Ministry had not imposed that Necessity, and extorted it from him." This worthy Minister reckoned it a Reproach to his Ministry to say he was disloyal, even at a Time when the King was not only a Prelatick King, but a King who was breaking the Covenant, overturning Presbytery, openly declaring against the Truth, and shedding the Blood of God's Saints: And, in his Supplication to the Parliament at that Time, he hath more to the same Purpose.

As for the Testimonies of Martyrs in the *Western Martyrology*, having never seen that Piece, I can say nothing anent them. I add the Testimony of an eminent Martyr more, and that is the Testimony of the Reverend Mr. *Thomas Archer*, who came over with *Argyle*, and suffered that Year. viz. in 1685: He was a Person of singular Learning, Judgment and Piety; and, in his last Words and Testimony, says †, "I own the King's Authority, since he hath it not only by God's Providence, but by the Consent of the
" *Estates*

† *Wodrow's Hist. Vol. 2. P. 555.*

“ Estates of the Land, who have determined that he is the
 “ lawful Successor : And it is a Question if he be worse
 “ than those whom the Prophets have been subject unto
 “ under the Old Testament, and those to whom the Apostle
 “ commands Subjection under the New.”

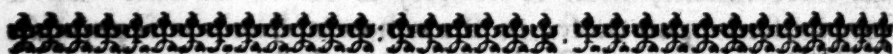
I have not cited any of our Acts of Assembly, nor any Thing from our *Reformers*, or the *Testimonies* of any of the *Martyrs*, as if I designed to vindicate Tyrants or Persecutors, or condemn any that have appeared for Religion and Liberty against them : Far from it ; for I think there was Truth in what King *James* is said to have uttered in his Parliament 1609, viz. “ *A King governing in a settled Kingdom, ceaseth to be a King, and degenerateth into a Tyrant, so soon as he leaveth to rule by his Laws ; much more when he beginneth to invade his Subjects Persons, Rights and Liberties ; to set up an arbitrary Power, impose unlawful Taxes, raise Forces, and make War upon his Subjects, whom he should protect and rule in Peace ; to pillage, plunder, waste and spoil his Kingdom, imprison, murder and destroy his People in a hostile Manner, to captivate them to his Pleasure* ||.” For, in such a Case, I humbly think the *Primores Regni* with the People may dethrone such a Tyrant, tho’, while in the Exercise of the Government, their Authority is to be owned. But I have insisted upon these, to shew how unlike our Separatists are in Principle and Practice to our *Reformers*, and to the Church of *Scotland* from 1638 to 1649, and to the most judicious among our *Martyrs*, as the Noble Marquis of *Argyle*, Mr. *James Guthrie*, Lord *Waristoun*, Mr. *James Robertson*, Mr. *Culloch* of *Barholm*, Captain *Arnot*, Gordon of *Knockbrex*, and his Brother ; to Mr. *John Kid* and Mr. *John King*, *John Wilson* Writer in *Lanark*, Mr. *John Dick*, and others, whose Testimonies in such a Point as this are surely more to be regarded than the Testimonies of Country-People, tho’ real Saints and approven of God in the Main of their Sufferings ; and both Parties could not be right in this Particular : And if our *Reformers* and Assemblies from 1638, and if such judicious Persons among our *Martyrs* owned the Authority of such Prelatick oppressing Rulers as they lived under, it can never enter into any Man’s Head to dream, they would have disowned the Authority of our Civil Rulers since the happy *Revolution*.

Now let the World judge, whether some Separatists have not a good deal of Confidence to affirm, that our *Reformers*, with the Church from 1638 to 1649, and all the
 Martyrs,

Martyrs, or the Martyrs *all along* from 1660 to the Revolution, disowned a Prelatick King, or that they were of their Principles.

Other Objections are raised by Separatists against joining in Communion with this Church, or other Reasons are adduced for separating from her; but I insist no further upon them, in regard they are largely handled by Mr. *Shields* in his *Treatise of Church-communion*, where solid and satisfying Answers are given to the Reasons advanced for Separation in the *Informatory Vindication*.

I have heard, that lately one in a Sermon cited *Numb. xvi. 26.* to prove that People should separate from Ministers of the Church of *Scotland*: But surely, if ever Scripture was wrested and pressed into Service to make it speak for a Party, this Scripture is; for, if it be applicable to any among us, then it is to them that do not separate from *Separatists* and *Schismatics*; these are the Persons that Scripture calls us to separate from: Hence, some have called Separation *Korabism*; and Mr. *Shields* charges *Korab*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* as guilty of Schism, saying, "With their Adherents they separated from *Moses* and the People, murmuring against him; and *Aaron* took Part with the *Schismatics*." *Shields* on Church-communion, P. 40.



C H A P. VII.

Containing Advices how to carry, as People would be kept from the Evil of Separation.

IM now arrived at the last Thing intended, namely, to conclude the Subject with some Advices, how to behave, as we would be kept from the Evil of Separation from a true Church, tho' her Faults should be many.

1st, We would study to know the Truth, and grow in Knowledge; for, alas! many speak Evil of the Things they understand not, as says the Apostles *Peter* * and *Jude* † Ignorance is not the Mother of Devotion, but of Deviation. The Affections of many go before their Judgment. Ignorance and rash Prejudices have often engaged People to oppose

* 2 Pet. ii. 12. † Jude Ver. 10.

oppose the Truth. The Grounds of Separation from a Church ly deep, and are beyond the Knowledge of many serious People, who want not a good deal of Knowledge, and, I doubt not, the sanctified Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, contained in our *Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*. Hence the Reverend Mr. *Webster*, in Preface to his Letter to Mr. *M^cMillan*, charged him, and such as joined with him, as "being equally ignorant of the Nature of Union with, and Separation from a Church, and of what will justify the one or the other." *Manton* commenting upon the Words of the Apostle *Jude*, *These speak Evil of the Things they know not*, says, "Usually we find the weakest Spirits are most violent, there being nothing of Judgment to counterbalance Affection. Men are all Flame and Rage. Liquors, when they run low, and are upon the Dregs, they grow more tart and sowre: So 'tis usually with the Dregs of Men; for, when they are weak and run low in Parts, their Opposition is most troublesom. What ado in the Ministry have we with young heady Professors, that have more Heat than Light?" Separation, says one, is usually accounted a sign of a high-grown Christian, but very absurdly. What the Reverend Mr. *Ralph Erskine* says in his Sermon upon the *Rent Vail*, 36. I'm apt to think is very applicable to many Separatists in our Day, where having given it as a Mark of such as have Ground to think the Vail is rent for their saving Good, *That their Hearts are rent for the Rents of the Church, for the Divisions of Reuben*, he expresseth himself thus, "I cannot justify the ignorant Zeal of many Professors, whose Hearts are rent from Ministers, and they know not for what; they can give no reasonable Account of their separating Courses." If a Scripture be asked, they can give none, or none to the Purpose, warranting their Practice.

2d Advice When, upon Search and Enquiry, you are convinced of the Truth relating to Separation, never think Shame to own it, tho' contrary to what you formerly professed. Alas! there is too much Truth in what *Manton* says *, viz. "When our Affections outstart our Judgments, Men grow obstinate in their ignorance, and will not know what they have a mind to hate; citing *Tertullian*, saying, *Malunt nescire quia jam oderunt*. And then he adds, "Rash Prejudices engaging Men in Opposition, they will not own the Truth when represented to them; having
" hated

* On *Jude*, P. 396.

“ hated it without Knowledge, they hate it against Know-
 “ ledge, and so are hardened against the Ways of God;
 “ which is the Case of many, who, in a blind Zeal, have
 “ appeared against the publick Ministry and Ordinances,
 “ and, being engaged, are loth to strike Sail and lay down
 “ their Defiance, when sufficient Conviction is offered.”

Augustine was not more famous for any Thing, than for his Ingenuity in writing a Book of *Retractions*, in which he frankly acknowledged his former Mistakes and Errors. *Jerome*, when writing to *Ruffinus*, says, “ Never blush to
 “ change thy Opinion; for neither you nor I, nor any
 “ Person alive, are of so great Authority, as to be asha-
 “ med to confess we have erred.”

3d Advice is, To beware of Man-worship, or of having Mens Persons in Admiration. This was the Spring of *Schism* in the Church of *Corinth*, in the Apostles Time; some said, they were of *Paul*, some of *Apollos*, and some of *Cephas*, or of *Peter**; they thought of Men above what was meet, and were puffed up for one against another, glorying in Men; some setting up for one, and some for another, as if the Person they admired had only been worth the hearing, disdaining other faithful Servants of the Lord, as unworthy to be named with them, tho’ sound Preachers of the same Gospel of Christ. And to despise these who are of weaker Gifts, is in some Sort a reproaching the Spirit of the Lord, as if he were defective in his Gifts to such; whereas this Variety sets forth the Freeness, and also the Fulness of his Gifts, who *worketh all these, dividing to every Man severally as he will* †. No doubt we may lawfully admire the Gifts and Graces of God bestowed upon Men, but so as to give all the Glory to God the Giver, and so as to guard cautiously against despising or undervaluing others of his sent Servants, tho’ of weaker Parts. The sinful Admiration of Men has many fatal Consequences. And among others, *Jenkyn* says, “ Nothing begets
 “ so great an Aptness in Men to receive Errors as this sin-
 “ ful Admiration.—— Affection commonly makes Men
 “ take down Falsities; and Error is easily received from
 “ them whom we much admire; and God doth often leave
 “ admired Teachers to err, for Trial of the People, and
 “ the punishing of their Vanity, in making God’s Truth
 “ to stand at the Devotion of the Teacher for its Accep-
 “ tance, and trampling upon the holy, and (perhaps)
 “ learned Labours of those who are more seeing and faith-
 “ ful

* 1 Cor. i. 12. † 1 Cor. xii. 11.

“ful than the admired.” And indeed, if once a Person be thus admired, what he writes and says, whether Minister or private Christian, 'tis often believed with implicate Faith; as if such an one should affirm the Church of *Scotland* is off the Foundation, and consequently ought to be separated from, it would be believed; or if he should insinuate, was it not for their Stipends, the honest Ministers of this Church would come out from her; or say, she is as corrupt this Day as the Church of *Rome*, or affirm, she hath adopted all the Errors of such or such Persons, because she hath not censured them as they deserved; or assert the Practice of our Assemblies speaks out a stated Design to have a Covenanted Work of Reformation altogether overthrown, and the Church modelled in a Conformity to the Church of *England*, if not worse; or affirm, the very Foundations, both of the Doctrine and Government of the Church of Christ, are overturned by the present Judicatories; or say, the Tabernacle is now removed without the Camp; or assert, Christ's Standard is not to be found therein, which is to say, the present Church of *Scotland* is no true Church of Christ; or affirm, there are no Falshoods in *Plain Reasons*; or affirm, the young Generation are altogether destitute of a Gospel-Ministry; or affirm, the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of this Church is not only sully'd, but overturned by the present Judicatories; or should assert, that such as stay in Communion with this Church of *Scotland*, have the Mark of the Beast on their Right-hand, and the like: Tho' I hope they are all Falshoods, yet all will be swallowed down as solid and certain Truths; and indeed, if they were Truths, I should think it our indispensable Duty to separate from her, as much as it was the Duty of our Reformers to separate from the apostate idolatrous Church of *Rome*. And they who use such harsh Language, are very opposite to that eminent Servant of Christ, *Jeremiab Burroughs*, when commenting on these Words of the Prophet *Hosea*, *Plead with your Mother, plead*; where, giving Rules how People are to carry in pleading with a Church, says, “They must not plead with her for every light Thing, for *Love covereth a Multitude of Infirmities*.” Another Rule is, “That in Pleading, they are to manifest all due Respect to that Society whereof they are Members.” His last Rule is, “You must do it in a very peaceable Way, so as to manifest that you desire Peace, and not to be the least Disturbance to the Peace of the Church, but that the Peace

“ of it is dear and precious to you; therefore, when ye
 “ have witnessed the Truth, and discharged your Consci-
 “ ence in it, you must then be content to sit down quiet:
 “ For so the Rule is, *That the Spirits of the Prophets must be*
 “ *subject to the Prophets*, in that Case. But if it should
 “ prove that the Church should continue, if the Evil be
 “ notorious and great as requires Departing, and the Church,
 “ after all Means used, and all Patience, should continue
 “ in it; in such a Case you may desire to be dismissed from
 “ it and depart, but in as peaceable a Way as possibly can
 “ be; yet continuing in due Respect unto the Church
 “ for all that, tho’ you should depart, only leaving your
 “ Witness behind you.”

4th Advice is, To guard against taking Offence upon slender or insufficient Grounds. Our Lord said, *Wo to the World because of Offences* *; and that Wo is not only against them that give just Ground of Stumbling, but also against all who are guilty of taking Offence upon small or no just Ground. If once People take Offence at Ministers, their Edification is greatly endangered. *Matther*, in his History of *New-England*, Book 7. P. 15. tells, That the Spreaders of *Antinomian Errors* in that Country set themselves with a manifold Subtilty to undermine the Esteem of the Ministers. “ Whence, says he, it came to pass, that even some who had followed *Ministers* Threethousand Miles, thro’ Ten thousand Deaths; yet now took up such Prejudices not only against their *Doctrines*, but against their *Persons* also, that they did never care to hear them, or see them any more.” ’Tis said of the Wicked, *They know not at what they stumble*, Prov. iv. 19. And as that is true of the Wicked, so ’tis sometimes the Weakness of some who are truly Godly, to take Offence at Ministers of the Gospel upon slender and insufficient Grounds, as if a Minister should go to preach Christ at a Sacrament, upon the Invitation of a Minister whom they reckon less tender, tho’ he should be there only upon the *Fest, Preparation*, or *Thanksgiving* Day, on which he preached. But, for as corrupt as the Generality of Churchmen were in the Days of our Lord, he scrupled not to preach in their Synagogues when invited by them, as *Luke* iv. 16, 17, 20. As *Rutherford* says †, “ If Folk would forbear to condemn the Practices of others as scandalous, until they understood the Nature of Scandal, there would be much less Scandal in the World than
 “ there

* *Mat.* xviii. 7. † *Disp. on Scand. and Ch. Libert.* P. 81.

"there is." And as People would be kept from taking Offence upon slender Grounds, they would consider their own personal moral Failings, how they are Men of like Passions themselves. It is a good Note of Mr. Boston's, "Many will tell how Church-Officers should walk, that "never look on themselves as obliged to follow their "Steps in the Way of Holiness; yet the Way of Holiness is but one to Ministers and People, tho' many are "ready to make two of them, and take the broadest to "themselves ‡."

5th Advice. Study to exercise mutual *Forbearance in Love*. This is the Advice of the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and when he was a Prisoner for Christ, and a Direction how to carry as we would *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith Christians are called*, Eph. iv. 1, 2, 3. As long as the Saints are here in a militant State they will need to exercise Forbearance, because of Difference in Sentiments, and because of Failings. Alas for the want of Love, Meekness and Forbearance! What that worthy Martyr Mr. John Kidd said in his last Speech, is too applicable to the Case of many Professors in our Day; "What a woful cursed Spirit of Bitterness is predomining in this Land and "in this Age? Ephraim vexing Judah, and Judah Ephraim, "Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh; the growing "Doggedness of this Temper, almost among us all, portends terrible Things from the Lord against Scotland."

6th Advice. As you would be kept from the heinous and horrible Evil of Separation, study to esteem Christ's Ministers *highly in Love for their Work's Sake*; and beware of dictating or carrying disrespectfully to them, albeit their Sentiments should not jump with yours in some Things. This is the Apostle's Exhortation, 1 *Thess.* v. 12, 13. And such as do any Thing to create Differences between a Minister of Christ and his People, as by saying, I wonder you can bear with such a Man, I wonder how you can hear him or subject yourselves to his Ministry, they play the Devil's Game, and are surely Agents for Hell. And what Hurt may come to Souls by alienating Peoples Affections from their Ministers, or occasioning causeless Withdrawing from their Ministry, such shall answer for it at the Bar of God one Day. And People would beware of dictating or carrying disrespectfully to the meanest of Christ's Servants. Mr. Boston, when exhorting People to submit to the Instructions, Admonitions and Exhortations

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‡ Serm. on 1 Cor. x. 17.

hortations of Church-officers *, says, "For People to
 " treat their Ministers imperiously and disrespectfully, and
 " superciliously to dictate to them how to behave in the
 " Exercise of their Office, as many do, and value them-
 " selves upon it, is an Argument of Pride and Emptiness,
 " of Mens forgetting themselves, and Regardlessness of
 " that Order which *Christ* the Head has appointed in his
 " Mystical Body."

7th Advice is, To guard against drinking in new Principles. Novelties in Religion are wild Fire, leading to the Precipice of Schism or Separation: The new Principles of *Novatus* and *Donatus*, who set up for greater Strictness in the primitive Times, led them to separate from the Church of Christ. 'Tis a new and unheard-of Principle in the Church of Christ, That we are not to join in the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, if some Persons, whether Church-officers or others, be admitted, who, because of their personal Miscarriages, ought to been kept back from that Ordinance, or because some Minister is employed who we think hath made some wrong Steps: For, granting it be so, this will never pollute the Ordinance to us. And this is evidenced at large by *Rutherford* in his *Due Right of Presbytery*, p. 233. and in his *Peaceable Plea*, p. 117, &c.

8th Advice is, Guard against being too much concerned for your own Reputation with any Person or People upon Earth. This seems to have been the Sin of *Peter* and *Barnabas*, Gal. ii. 12, 13. Guard against being too impatient of the Frowns, Displeasure, Censures, Reproaches or Contempt of any; study to live above those. Tho' we are highly to prize the Love, Esteem and Favour of those who are the Excellent in all the Earth, yet we are never to prize it so as to separate with them lest they be offended, without clear Scripture-grounds. And here, with a little Variation, I may use the Words of the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* in another Case †, "Are you so much con-
 " vinced of the Necessity of *their Esteem* (he hath of this
 " Oath) as that you shall be in a Case afterward to justify
 " your Conduct before the Bar of God, and to answer
 " the Challenges of your own Consciences when it shall
 " be laid to your Door, that by your Separation (he hath
 " of swearing this Oath) you have had an active Hand in
 " renting and ruining this National Church? Will Re-
 " gard for *their Esteem* support you in such a Case, when
 " you

* Serm. on 1 Cor. x. 17. † Essay on Abjuration, p. 27, 28.

" you shall see your Mother-church wallowing in her
 " Blood, and torn in Pieces by Divisions? Is the dividing
 " and ruining of a National Church such a light Thing
 " with you, that it will not serve to preponderate the
 " *Esteem of Men?*" (He hath the *Command of the Magi-*
strate.) Indeed we are to do all we can to *please our Neigh-*
bour to his Edification; but there is no pleasing of some.
 Our Brethren emitted first one, and then a second *Testimony*;
 yet 'tis said, and I know for certain, some of the People
 threaten, unless there be a fuller and more faithful Testi-
 mony, they will not be satisfied for all they have testified
 and declared; affirming they think very little of the for-
 mer Testimonies.

My last *Advice* is, To ply God's *Throne of Grace*, plead-
 ing that as he hath divided us in his Anger and just Dis-
 pleasure, so plead that for his Name's Sake he may heal
 our Breaches which are *wide as the Sea*; that he may heal
 the *Daughter of Zion*, broken with a great Breach and very
 grievous Blow. This is the Command of Zion's King, That
 we *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*. Surely, among the
 many Causes of Fasting, our Divisions, Rents and Breaches
 are not the least; *The Anger of the Lord having divided us*,
 our Divisions may occasion *great Thoughts and Searchings of*
Heart: And were we importunate Wrestlers, that the God
 of Peace would send Peace with Truth and heal our
 Breaches, it would be a *Token for Good*. The Psalmist was
 perswaded the Time to favour Zion was come, when the
 Lord's People took Pleasure in the Dust of Zion, crying to
 him by Prayer and Supplication. *Durham* says †, " There
 " is a Fire that cometh from the Altar, which hath right
 " terrible Effects. Contention and Strife about spiritual
 " Things amongst Church-men, and flowing from them to
 " others, is a very sad Judgment, and hath very terrible
 " Effects; it most marreth the Beauty of the Church; it
 " obstructeth the spiritual Growth of God's People, and
 " burneth up all their spiritual Life. Lord save us from
 " this Judgment, and make all his Servants and People
 " wary of kindling it, and make us more earnest in Prayer
 " that God would quench what of it is begun."

But to conclude, As formerly, so still, I acknowledge,
 both among Ministers and People in this Church there
 are many Things which call for bitter Mourning and La-
 mentation, tho' they are not sufficient Ground of Secession
 or Separation from her, more than before 1733. And tho',

When the Reverend Mr. *Ebenezer Erskine* owned, there is a great Body of faithful Ministers in this Church; yet I fear many, yea most of the Sins mentioned by the Assembly 1646, when enumerating the Enormities and Corruptions of the Ministry at that Time, are to be found among her Ministers at this Juncture. And also, 'tis much to be lamented, the Sins mentioned by the Commission of the General Assembly 1649, respecting the *Word, Sacraments, Discipline, Prayer, and relating more immediately to Christ himself and the free Grace of God in him, and in Relation to the Operations of the Holy Spirit, and to Ministers their preaching of the Gospel of Christ*, are all to be found among Ministers and People in our Day; in which, alas, Symptoms of our dangerous Case are such, that they who run may read them. 'Tis evident God is angry, so that a Storm of Divine Wrath hovers over our Heads, and is ready to break upon us, unless sovereign Grace, Repentance and Reformation prevent.

Now, as in this *Essay* I have testified against sundry Things in the Conduct of this Church since the *Revolution*; so, was I here to emit a Testimony against the Sins of our Land in former and present Times, I should think myself obliged to testify against many Things which were amiss in the Church of *Scotland* from 1637 to 1650, yea, and for sundry Years further back, when Church and State were guilty of many heinous Sins, which to this Day have never yet been acknowledged in particular; and against other Things in her Conduct in later Times: As also, against sundry Things in the Brethrens Testimony as not being Matters of Fact; and against sundry Things in their Conduct, which, in my Opinion, are very opposite to Presbyterian Principles and the Lord's Word, as the making their Testimony a Term of Ministerial or Christian Communion; and against the *Division, Dissention or Separation* of all such as since the *Revolution* have never owned the State, nor joined with the Church of *Scotland*; and against all that have separated of late, who now are ready to exclaim against her as being such an apostate Church for many Years bygone, as ought not to be joined with; never considering that, if converted, it was in this Church Christ espoused them to himself by the Ministry of his Servants, who have had many Seals of their Ministry, and Evidences of Christ's keeping Communion with them during all that Time: And against all *Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresy, Schism, Profaneness*; and, in a Word, against every Thing that is

contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness.

And, was I here to make a Declaration of my Principles, I would declare my cheerful and cordial Adherence, as to the whole of the Testimony of God, the Testimony of Jesus, the Divine Law and Testimony; so to every Thing engaged unto by Ministers of this Church at their *Ordination*, and to every Thing said in my Synodical Sermon, or in writing for the Peoples Right to elect their Pastors, if it be not a Supposition anent the Act of Assembly 1646, in reference to the Election of Kirk-sessions, and an Assertion anent the *second Book of Discipline*, which, whether it give the Election to the People as well as Consent, I dare not be so positive. So none have Ground to charge me as opposite in this *Essay* to myself, or any Thing I ever published formerly, tho' our Brethren are strangely altered of late; for, till 1733, I never heard any of them drop a Word favouring of Separation or Secession from this National Church.

But, without further insisting, after considering all our Brethren have written in their *Representations*, in the *State of the Process*, in *Answer to the Narrative*, in their *Reasons of not acceding*, and in their first and second *Testimonies*; I'm still of the Mind, that no sufficient Ground hath been given for Separation or Secession from this Church: And, I think, our Brethren and other Separatists should not be displeased with them who cannot see Things in that same Light in which, it seems, they view them; and far less ought they to preach for, or encourage People to break, if in their Power, the Ministry of all such Servants of the King of Glory as have not Freedom to forsake their heavenly Father's House and Mother-Church to join them.

How happy should we be, as our *Lord is one*, if his *Name was one*, and his People in our Land were *one*, and if we were all worshipping him *with one Consent*, *forbearing and forgiving one another in Love*, endeavouring to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*, from such Considerations as, that *there is one Body, one Spirit, even as we are called in one Hope of our Calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in all his People* †! And it might be a blessed Mean of attaining to this, were we all concerned to comply with that good and wholesom Counsel given by the Reverend Mr. *Ralph Erskine* *, when he adviseth to cry unto the Lord, "That the Devil's scattering Wind, which he hath raised in our Day for separating and dividing Ministers and
" Chri-

† *Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6.* * *Hap. Cong. P. 196.*

"Christians from one another, may be laid." Without doing any Thing against the Truth, let us be of one Mind, living in Peace; and then we have the Promise, that the God of Love and Peace shall be with us †. Peace be to the Brethren and Love. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity. Amen ||.

† 2 Cor. xiii. 11. || Eph. vi. 23, 24.

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WHEN the Author began to publish this Essay, he was resolved in an Appendix to have published a fuller Answer to a Part of that Book, intituled, Plain Reasons for Presbyterians dissenting from the Revolution-Church in Scotland, instancing some of the many Falshoods thereof, besides those noticed in the foregoing Essay; and to have published a Vindication of Durham's Treatise on Scandal from the Charge of being vitiated, which is of late alledged by some Separatists; and also a Vindication of Wodrow's History from some Things alledged against it by them: Likewise, without making particular Enquiry into the Accusation against Captain Porteous, he designed to have published Remarks upon the different Sentiments and Conduct of Ministers and People relating to that Affair, whence it would appear, notwithstanding of these, the Argument of the foregoing Essay remains the same, and equally conclusive: But, in regard this Book hath swelled beyond Expectation, the Publication of these is delayed at this Time. Also he designed a Vindication of the Narrative of the late Settlement of the Parish of Portmoak, in Reply to a Pamphlet, intituled, The just Account of that Settlement: But, judging impartial Readers may easily see the pretended just Account is no Answer to that Narrative, which was subscribed by Six of the Elders of that Parish as true and just, nor is it so much as an Offer of Answer to many material Things therein; he hath judged this to be needless. And, without noticing the false Assertions, base Insinuations, and scurrillous Expressions therein, still he is firmly perswaded, that, all Things considered, it is a Settlement, which in no Time since the Reformation but would been approved as just by the Church of Scotland, or any other of the reformed Churches; and that they who are most zealous for the Peoples Right to elect their Pastors, may, in the greatest Consistency with their Principle, appear for such Settlements as was the last at Portmoak. Hence the Reverend Mr. Thomas Mair Minister of the Gospel at Orwel, whose Residence is in the Confines of that Parish, and had the best Opportunity to know the State thereof; he appeared in Earnest for it, declaring in Face of Synod, and in Hearing of such of that Parish as were opposite to this Settlement, That, considering the Methods taken for sinking the Reputation of Mr. D. and to hinder his Settlement at Portmoak, it was a Wonder so many of that Parish did still adhere unto him: This was told in the Narrative, tho' the Author of the Account has made no Answer unto it. The above Settlement was made by the Reverend Synod of Fife, without a contradictory Vote, if it was not one or two Elders.